Sunday, April 5, 2026 No 94 ₹8

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DH on Sunday

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The Power of Good

Rizvi heroics seal Delhi's win over MI

Talented batter takes apart the Mumbai bowling with a fluent 90-ball 51 while chasing

P12

Bengaluru techie loses Rs 1.46L while trying to buy IPL tickets on Instagram

P3A

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

Social Welfare Department

"IN THE PROGRESS OF THE COUNTRY LIES OUR PROGRESS;
IN ITS SALVATION, OUR SALVATION AND IN ITS EMANCIPATION, OUR EMANCIPATION"

- Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram

119th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Garlanding the Statue of

Messiah of Green Revolution, National Leader, Former Deputy Prime Minister of India

Dr. BABU JAGJIVAN RAM

April 5, 2026, Sunday at 10.00 AM

West Gate of Vidhana Soudha, Bengaluru

Stage Event

Time - 10.30 AM

Venue - Grand Steps of Vidhana Soudha

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Commissioner
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South Indian states won't lose LS seats, says Modi

Asserts that states that controlled population won't be 'punished'

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

PM Narendra Modi during a roadshow ahead of Assembly elections, in Thiruvalla, Kerala, on Saturday. PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday tried to allay fears that South Indian states stood to lose seats after the proposed increase in the strength of the Lok Sabha, saying that the states that successfully controlled population would not be put to any disadvantage.

Addressing an NDA election rally at Thiruvalla in Kerala, Modi asserted that the Lok Sabha seats of South Indian states won't be reduced and that they will also benefit from the increase in seats across the country.

"Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Goa and some other states have done well in population control. They must not lose any Lok Sabha seats, We will take steps to ensure that the seats are fully protected," the PM said.

Parliament is set to reconvene on April 16 to pass the law for earmarking 33% seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies. As a result, the number of Lok Sabha seats is set to increase from 543 to 816.

The Opposition has been demanding that the southern states should not be "punished" with fewer parliamentary seats and reduced financial allocations for achieving population control.

> Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Goa and some other states have done well in population control. They must not lose any Lok Sabha seats, We will take steps to ensure that the seats are fully protected.
>
> **NARENDRA MODI,** PM

Targeting the Opposition, Modi said rumours were being spread about the proposed hike in Lok Sabha seats.

"There are false rumours being spread that seats will be reduced in South Indian states due to population control, but this is completely untrue," he said.

Modi further said women empowerment would remain one of the key focuses of his government. Over these years, a series of schemes for women empowerment and for ensuring protection to women were rolled out by the BJP-NDA government, he said.

Modi said his government's goal was to ensure 33% women's representation in Parliament from 2029 onwards and urged all parties to support the legislation.

Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh had alleged that the proposal to increase Lok Sabha seats would put South Indian states at a disadvantage.

"...The number of seats allocated to each state is also proposed to be increased by 50%. Proportions may not change for the present, but there are deeper implications that cannot be wished away. Any increase in the gap in the existing strengths of different states in the Lok Sabha will place South Indian states at a disadvantage," he posted on X recently.

In his address in the Christian-dominated Central Travancore region of Kerala, Modi also said the Congress and CPM were spreading lies over the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act amendment as well as CAA and Uniform Civil Code.

▸ Modi, Page 6

Open Hormuz in 48 hrs or face 'hell': Trump

WAR FRONT: Israel prepares to attack Iran's energy facilities; US searches for missing pilot

WASHINGTON/TEHRAN/
CAIRO, AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump on Saturday said Iran had 48 hours left to make a deal on opening the vital Strait of Hormuz or face "Hell", even as Iranian troops and US forces raced against each other to locate a missing American pilot from one of two warplanes downed over Iran and the Gulf.

The latest ultimatum came against the backdrop of the downing of two US military jets, despite assertions by Trump and his Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth that US forces had total control of the skies over Iran.

The Trump administration hasn't made an official comment on the destruction of US fighter jets in the Gulf.

Iranian fire brought down a two-seat US F-15E jet, officials in both countries said, while two US officials said the pilot ejected from an A-10 Warthog fighter aircraft that crashed in Kuwait after being hit by Iranian fire.

Two Black Hawk choppers engaged in the search for the missing pilot were hit by Iranian fire but made it out of Iranian airspace. The scale of injuries to the crew was unclear.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said it was combing a southwestern area near where the pilot's plane came down, while the regional governor promised a commendation for anyone who captured or killed "forces of the hostile enemy".

The Khatam al-Anbiya joint military command said it used a new air defence system on Friday, which targeted a US fighter jet, three drones and two cruise missiles.

Meanwhile, *Reuters*, citing a senior Israeli official, reported that Tel Aviv is preparing to attack Iranian energy facilities but is awaiting a green light from the US. Any such attack would likely come within the next week, it said.

With Iran's leadership defiant since the start of the war, its foreign minister in principle has left the door open for peace talks via mediation from Pakistan, but gave no sign of willingness to bow to Trump's demands.

"We are deeply grateful to Pakistan for its efforts and have never refused to go to Islamabad. What we care about are the terms of a conclusive and lasting END to the illegal war that is imposed on us," Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on X.

Damaged facilities of foreign oil firms after a drone attack in Iraq's Basra. REUTERS

Remember when I gave Iran ten days to MAKE A DEAL or OPEN UP THE HORMUZ STRAIT. Time is running out -- 48 hours before all Hell will reign (sic) down on them

DONALD TRUMP, US President

FROM CONFLICT

US-Israeli strikes on Iran target Bushehr nuclear power station, a petrochemical hub, a trade terminal and a cement factory

- Indian-flagged LPG tanker transits through the Strait of Hormuz
- Iran targets an Israel-linked ship in Bahrain port, setting it on fire
- Iran executes two men convicted of membership in a banned opposition group
- Shrapnel from intercepted drones injures four people in Bahrain
- Israel counters missiles fired from Iran, Yemen; multiple injuries reported
- Israel issues "urgent warning" for residents in parts of the Lebanese city of Tyre to evacuate

No payment issues over Iran oil, says govt

The Centre said Indian refiners are buying crude oil from Iran and that there are no payment-related difficulties in purchasing Iranian oil. It also dismissed reports that an India-bound tanker carrying Iranian crude had rerouted to China due to "payment issues".
Details on Page 7

Long queues at gas stations

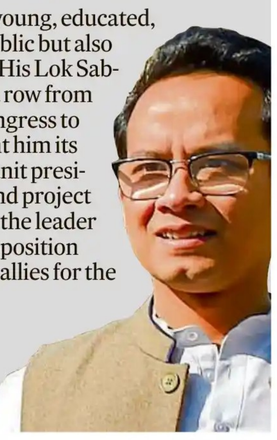
The LPG crisis in Bengaluru has taken a turn for the worse as thousands of auto-rickshaw drivers spent another day in long queues, only to be met with "No Stock" boards or rationed fuel. The situation turned volatile at several points, forcing the police to deploy patrolling units.
Details on Page 4

'People of Assam fed up with misgovernance'

At 43, Gaurav Gogoi is young, educated, and vocal not just in public but also inside the Parliament. His Lok Sabha election victory thrice in a row from Assam since 2014 led the Congress to appoint him its state-unit president and project him as the leader of the opposition camp against the BJP and its allies for the April 9 Assembly elections.

DH Political Theatre

He took time off his busy schedule for a tête-à-tête with **Sumir Karmakar.**



Interview on Page 8

Despite toilets, 27% in state still prefer open defecation: Survey

BHARATH JOSHI
BENGALURU, DHNS

About one in four respondents with a toilet at home still prefer open defecation, a government-approved survey has found, revealing how entrenched the practice is despite years of public spending to improve hygiene.

A total of 1,121 respondents from 12 districts were asked about the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) in an evaluation study whose findings have been published by the state-run Karnataka Monitoring and Evaluation Authority (KMEA).

While 73% of respondents said their family members use toilets, 27% of them reported open defecation.

"When asked the reason for not using toilets, the majority of the respondents were of the view that they are comfortable and prefer defecation in the open," the survey report stated. Some of the respondents said they do not use toilets "due to unavailability of water and light," the report added.

In contrast, all respondents said they were aware that unsafe sanitation practices, such as open defecation, significantly increase health risks.

A locked toilet. DH FILE PHOTO

The survey, which also evaluated the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and biogas plants in the state, was done by Pan India Network.

"Raichur, Ballari, Kalaburgi and Belagavi report more cases of open defecation, which indicates these areas still face significant challenges in sanitation," the report stated. "Kolar, Shivamogga, Dharwad and Hassan show no cases of open defecation in the responses, suggesting these areas may be more successful in tackling sanitation issues, likely due to better infrastructure or higher community awareness," it stated.

All the respondents said they received government grants to build toilets.

According to data, over 54 lakh individual household latrines (IHHL) have been constructed in both rural and urban areas under the Swachh Bharat Mission in Karnataka.

Overall, the survey found that toilets built and efficient door-to-door household waste collection under SBM "significantly reduced" open defecation, with many reporting a decline in diseases like diarrhoea, malaria and dengue".

Access to adequate, equitable sanitation, hygiene and ending open defecation by 2030 is one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

The report recommended empowering local communities to eliminate open defecation.

"Compact toilet designs that require minimal space can be provided in smaller areas to facilitate the construction of toilets for the household having the space constraints," it stated.

'Centre should view states as coordinates, not subordinates'

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Supreme Court Judge, Justice B V Nagarathna, on Saturday, said the citizens of a state cannot be discriminated against in matters of development or in governance and the Centre ought to view the states as coordinates and not subordinates.

She said, federalism ensures that governance is not a matter of unilateral command, but of negotiation and coordination.

Justice B V Nagarathna

"Therefore, the need of the hour is to have greater coordination between the Union and state governments. The state governments are not subordinate to the Union government except as stipulated under the Constitution and therefore, must be accorded the treatment that is due to them irrespective of the political parties that may be in power," she said.

In her speech on theme, 'Constitutionalism beyond Rights: Why Structure Matters' at 1st Dr Rajendra Prasad Memorial Lecture in Patna, Justice Nagarathna said, inter-party differences or distinct political ideologies have to be kept aside in the matter of Centre – state relations as the latter is in the realm of Constitutional governance, which would not depend on which party may be ruling at the Centre and which other party may be ruling at the state level.

"The citizens must have the benefit of both governments with regard to the welfare schemes and measures that are initiated by the respective governments," she said.

Emphasising that the Constitution is said to be federal in structure and unitary in spirit, she said, "Therefore, the citizens of a state cannot be discriminated against in matters of development or in governance. There cannot be a pick and choose approach vis-à-vis the states when it is in the realm of development programmes for the citizens of a State. Equity, as a matter of a fair approach, must be adopted."

She also stressed, similarly, that between states, the relations must be cordial and in accordance with the constitutional dharma.

▸ Nagarathna, Page 6

Stalin fires up poll trail over CBSE new framework

CHENNAI, DHNS: Turning the CBSE's plans to introduce a three-language formula in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 into a major election issue, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Saturday challenged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah to campaign by declaring that they will implement the language policy in the state. Stalin also targeted AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami on the issue by daring him to contest the remarks of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan who batted for the three-language policy.
Details on Page 7

DUST STORM

People shield themselves as they walk amid a dust storm near the Sangam, in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj on Saturday. PTI

Nine of family killed as car falls into well in Nashik

MUMBAI, DHNS: Nine members of a family, including six children, were killed after their car fell into an open well in Maharashtra's Nashik district late on Friday night, police said.

Rescue and relief operations continued until the early hours of Saturday, but authorities confirmed there were no survivors. The accident occurred in the Shivajinagar area of Dindori town.

All victims were residents of Indore village in Dindori and were returning home after attending a function.

According to preliminary reports, the driver lost control while negotiating a stretch near the well and the vehicle veered off the road and fell into the uncovered structure.

Upon hearing the crash, the locals rushed to the spot. However, darkness hampered rescue efforts.

Fire and rescue and disaster response teams joined the operation on information. Teams from the Nashik district police, administrative staff, SDRF, and NDRF also rushed to the spot.

Eyewitnesses stated that the absence of protective barriers or warning signs around the well significantly contributed to the tragedy.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis termed the incident "extremely tragic and heart-wrenching".

Kannada-medium teachers in Maha face 'language' test

VITTAL SHASTRI
KALABURAGI, DHNS

Candidates who completed D.Ed or B.Ed in Kannada medium in Maharashtra face a difficult situation while writing eligibility test for the post of Kannada teachers in that state as they are provided with question papers only in Marathi or English.

While the Maharashtra State Council of Examinations (MSCE) gives 'Kannada' medium option when filling out application forms for teachers' recruitment exams, the exam body doesn't extend the courtesy when it comes to the actual test.

Pro-Kannada outfits allege many qualified candidates are failing due to the lack of question papers in Kannada, leading to a shortage of Kannada teachers in Maharashtra.

The issue has come to the forefront again after the MSCE recently issued a notification for the recruitment exam, which will be conducted on June 26, to hire 135 Kannada teachers.

Malikjan Shaikh, president of the Adarsha Kannada Balaga, said that Kannada-speaking candidates in Maharashtra are forced to take their exams in Marathi or English while Marathi-speaking candidates are provided question papers in their mother tongue in Karnataka. Moreover, there is the issue of passing the state Teacher Eligibility Test (TET), which has only Marathi and English options for question papers.

"It is mandatory for all teachers in Maharashtra to clear the TET by 2027 as per the Supreme Court's directive. However, the Maharashtra government is inflicting linguistic injustice upon minority Kannada-speaking teachers," he said.

Stating that protecting linguistic minorities is a constitutional duty of the state, Shaikh said that injustice will not be tolerated if the MSCE does not rectify the issue.

It is feared that Maharashtra's linguistic policy will affect more than a thousand Kannada teachers already serving in the state as it is mandatory for all of them to clear the TET.

▸ Kannada medium, Page 6

> If qualified teachers do not become available, there is a fear that Kannada medium schools in Maharashtra will close down in the near future. This will be a major blow to the Kannada culture and education in the border regions.
>
> **SOMASHEKHAR JAMSHETTI**
> President, Kannada Sahitya Parishat Maharashtra unit

ON TIME

Food for thought: Study says punctual diet has health benefits

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Grandmothers' advice to eat lunch and dinner on time is not merely traditional wisdom: Indian scientists have found how adjusting meal timings can help prevent metabolic and musculoskeletal complications, particularly among women.

In a new study, biologists from Belagavi and Lucknow collaborated to show how aligning food intake with the body's internal biological clock favourably influences fat accumulation, insulin resistance, bone health, and muscle integrity in postmenopausal women.

The researchers chose to study this group because of the dramatic transition a female body undergoes at the loss of reproductive life, often leading

to multiple metabolic disorders. They wanted to find strategies to deal with such complications.

The team comprising scholars from KLE Academy of Higher Education and Research, Belagavi and CSIR-Central Drug Research Institute, Lucknow used a mouse model for the experiment in which rats' ovaries were surgically removed to mimic postmenopausal oestrogen deficiency.

The scientists subsequently examined how time-restricted feeding influences fat accumulation, insulin resistance, bone health, and muscle integrity.

Animals subjected to unrestricted feeding showed many postmenopausal metabolic dysfunctions, including a 37% increase in fat mass, impaired glucose tolerance, elevated inflammatory markers, and significant deterioration in bone mineral density and muscle integrity.

In contrast, time-restricted feeding completely prevented fat gain, improved glucose clearance by 26% and suppressed inflammation, despite identical food intake across groups.

Unlike typical diet approaches, time-restricted feeding didn't reduce total food/calorie intake. Instead, it confined eating to the body's natural active hours — daytime in humans and nighttime in rats — when metabolism is most efficient.

"This is one of the first studies to show that a simple change in meal timing, without reducing calories, can deliver multi-system benefits that rival pharmacological interventions," said team leader Madan M Godbole, a veteran researcher at KLE Academy.

The team also compared the efficacy of time-restricted feeding with liraglutide, a drug used for weight loss and metabolic control.

Food intake aligning with the circadian rhythm demonstrated effects comparable to, and in certain parameters even exceeding those of liraglutide, particularly in preserving bone health and muscle mass.

▸ Meal time, Page 6

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DH on Sunday

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I go to Parl to create impact, not ruckus: Chadha

P7

Big Picture

The peptide economy

A dive into the rising accessibility of weight-loss drugs, weighing the convenience of a quick fix against the deeper costs of engineering our bodies

Page 14

Ageing population and migrant flows: South India confronts a demographic test

With low fertility, an ageing population and rising internal migration, southern states must rethink labour, gender and welfare policies to sustain long-term growth and economic resilience

Southern states generally have a lower share of their population in the 0–14 age group compared with northern states. REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE; DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

SNV SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

When Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu recently announced plans to draft legislation incentivising families to have more children, it may have sounded like a political novelty. In reality, it was a signal flare — a public acknowledgment of a quiet demographic challenge emerging across India's more prosperous southern states.

Decades of investment in female literacy, women's empowerment and family planning enabled Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to reach replacement-level fertility of 2.1 children per woman well ahead of the rest of the country.

Kerala achieved this milestone as early as 1988, when India's national total fertility rate (TFR) stood at 4. Tamil Nadu followed in 1993, with Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka reaching replacement-level fertility later, in 2001 and 2005, respectively.

Now, that hard-won demographic success is becoming a source of deep economic anxiety — not just over births, but over labour supply,

INSIGHT

growth, public finances and a region increasingly reliant on the northern states it once outpaced.

Fresh data from the Sample Registration System (SRS) 2021 underscores the scale of the shift. All five southern states now report total fertility rates between 1.5 and 1.6 children per woman, steeper declines than recent projections anticipated.

At this level, each generation is roughly 25% smaller than the last, raising the prospect of shrinking communities, tightening labour markets and growing strain on public finances over time.

The contrast with northern India is stark. Bihar leads with a TFR of 3.0, followed by Uttar Pradesh at 2.7 and Madhya Pradesh at 2.6, nearly double the South's levels. Bihar's crude birth rate stands at 25.6 per 1,000 people, compared with 12.9 in Kerala.

These are not marginal differences; they point to 'two Indias' moving in opposite demographic directions, and potentially on a collision course.

A projection report by the International Institute of Migration and Development and the Population Foundation of India confirms what demographers have long warned: southern states are likely to begin losing population in absolute terms after 2041.

Research published in *Nature* estimates that India's demographic dividend added 1.9 percentage points annually to the gross domestic product between 1981 and 2021. If the country's most economically productive states begin to run out of working-age people, those gains could go into reverse.

Reflecting on the TFR trend, S Irudaya Rajan, one of India's foremost demographers, sees it as the inevitable outcome of decades of political commitment to fertility control. He points to a campaign in Kerala during the 1970s, when a government sterilisation drive was framed almost as a public festival.

"Within a day or two, they sterilised 70,000 women. The entire government machinery was committed to reducing fertility," he told *DH*. "Now they are asking people to increase fertility. When the government incentivised smaller families, people embraced the idea. But incentives to have more children may not work the same way. The current generation is likely to follow patterns set by their parents. The next generation may think differently, but that could take 30 to 40 years," he adds.

Rajan's prescription is structural, not transactional. "Policy intervention matters, not incentives. What is needed are concrete guarantees that women can re-enter the workforce after having children, not just gestures," he adds.

International evidence supports his position. A November 2025 RAND Corporation assessment of China's pronatalist programme concluded that it had failed to reverse the fertility decline.

▸ Demographic test, Page 2

Art & Pursuits
Page 18

Wave master

Many 19th-century artists painted the sea, but it was Ivan Aivazovsky who made the ocean pulse with life. A tribute

Food & Drink
Page 17

Kitchen rage

The recent exit of a Michelin-starred head chef has led to a global debate on abuse in commercial kitchens

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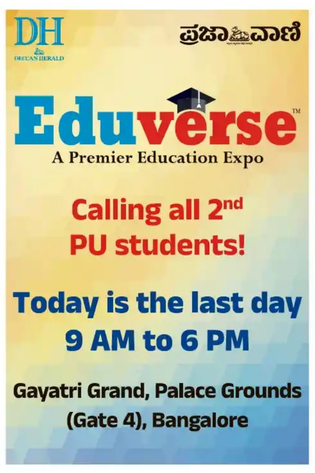


Quickly

Artemis crew over halfway to the moon

Now more than halfway to the moon, the Artemis II astronauts were toasted by Canada on Saturday as they prepared for their historic lunar fly-around to push deeper into space than even the Apollo astronauts. The three Americans and one Canadian will reach their destination Monday.

Details on Page 9

Modi to launch BJP's Bengal campaign today

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to visit Cooch Behar on Sunday to launch the BJP's campaign for the West Bengal Assembly elections. Modi is scheduled to address a 'Bijoy Sankalpa Sabha' at the historic Ras Mela grounds around noon.

Degrees without jobs: The graduate paradox

Rising educational attainment meets stagnant employment, as AI and structural imbalances reshape the labour market

DEEPANSHU MOHAN

For decades, India's low- and middle-income classes have been built around a simple promise: higher education leads to a stable, secure job that safeguards upward mobility. That promise, supported by a shared public-private education landscape, now seems to be unravelling.

The issue is less about the number or availability of institutions and more about the nature and quality of education, coupled with the dynamic changes in the job market.

Each year, millions of graduates enter the Indian labour market, not into better opportunities, but into an increasingly crowded queue where degrees no longer guarantee employment.

This widening structural imbalance is now being sharpened by global technological shifts.

A March 2026 study by AI safety and research company Anthropic shows that high-skill occupations such as business services and computing are projected to grow more slowly, while lower-exposure sectors like construction continue to absorb labour.

Recent data from the State of Working India 2026 report by Azim Premji University reflects this clearly. Between 2004 and 2023, an average of around 5 million graduates entered the labour force each year, but only about 2.8 million found employment.

The result is not just unemployment, but also underemployment, credential inflation and rising household risk.

India's higher education expansion has been rapid. The number of graduates has risen from 5 million in

The SUNDAY STORY

1983 to 63 million in 2023, but without a corresponding transformation in labour demand. Among graduates aged 20 to 29, nearly 11 million are unemployed.

Among graduates, only 6.7% secure permanent salaried jobs, and just 3.7% enter white-collar employment. Increasingly, education functions less as a guarantee of mobility and more as a marker of relative position.

What is unfolding is not just a labour market failure, but a crisis of expectations.

India's labour market remains shaped by a deep-rooted attachment to credentialism, where degrees are seen as the primary pathway to security. Families invest heavily in formal education, often prioritising low-risk career paths over entrepreneurial or vocational alternatives.

The ITI ecosystem has expanded by around 300 per cent since the mid-2000s, with nearly 80 per cent privately operated. This expansion has prioritised scale over quality, weakening training standards and institutional credibility. With weak industry linkages, training often fails to translate into employment, and credentials increasingly serve as markers of participation rather than signals of capability.

As the economy fails to generate corresponding opportunities, credentials lose their signalling value.

Expanding education without a corresponding increase in labour demand does not resolve unemployment; it merely redistributes it across an increasingly credentialled workforce.

▸ A credential trap, Page 2

Government of Bharat
Committed to
Nari Shakti Vandan
Nearly 12 crore women like me have received safe maternity care
Crores of children like me are getting full nutrition
My child and I are getting vaccinated on time
CBC 22201/13/0001/2627

Balancing work and integration

Demographic test, from Page 1

For Rajan, the fundamental calculus of parenthood has been inverted. "Earlier, children were considered assets. Now they are like liabilities," he adds.

The shift in perception is visible across life stages: births once supported by extended families now come with high private hospital costs, while informal childcare has eroded as nuclear families move to urban areas. Women face an added challenge, as career breaks for child-rearing often leave them with limited paths back to work.

The result is a fertility floor that shows no sign of rising. The norm has become self-reinforcing, a "social diffusion," as Rajan puts it, that spreads through communities much like knowledge.

The remittance economy

Nowhere is the demographic change more consequential than in the migration and remittance economy that has long sustained the South. Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have for decades sent skilled and semi-skilled labour to the Gulf and beyond. Between 2017 and 2024, Kerala's share of national remittances edged up from 19% to 19.7%; Tamil Nadu's share rose from 8% to 10.4%. NRI deposits in Kerala's banks now total around Rs 3 lakh crore. For now, the flows remain robust.

Rajan, who has conducted the Kerala Migration Survey for 25 years, argues that the channel has upgraded rather than contracted. "80% of Kerala workers in the Gulf used to be unskilled. Earlier you had 10 people in Dubai each sending $100. Now you have three people earning $400 each. Fewer people, more money," he adds.

The shift is evident in Gulf migration patterns. Data from the e-Migrate portal and a Rajya Sabha question on emigration clearances issued to blue-collar workers tell a revealing story. Outflows from traditional southern source states like Kerala have fallen, partly because rising local skill levels and higher domestic wages reduce the incentive to take low-wage jobs abroad. Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have become the dominant sources of low- and semi-skilled workers for the Gulf's construction, hospitality, and services sectors.

Benoy Peter, Executive Director of the Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development in Kerala, notes a similar upgrade on the ground. "Overseas migrants from Kerala are increasingly seeking skilled jobs, thanks to easier access to education," he says. He cites a young man from Kollam who left for the UAE with basic schooling, learned a trade in a glass factory, and now runs his own business. "Many migrants follow this path, starting as workers and becoming employers. Remittances to Kerala are still rising, but as more Malayalis move to Europe, Canada, and Australia, mostly as students, they may settle there, potentially reducing future remittances," he adds.

Gulf-bound migrants, even those who became employers, generally maintained strong financial and emotional ties to Kerala. The new wave of student migrants to Europe, Canada and Australia is different. Rajan notes, "When people move from Gulf countries to non-Gulf countries, you may lose them permanently." Peter adds that this trend could eventually create a significant shortage of workers, even for skilled jobs, in Kerala.

On the other hand, declining birth rates in the southern states are steadily reshaping the region's labour landscape. Migrants from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh work in construction sites, factories, fishing docks and domestic kitchens across Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

In 2025, the School of Social Sciences at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru, surveyed 600 migrant workers living in informal settlements in the city. Of these, 249 were inter-state migrants, and around 85% of them came from six states: Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Retna Kumar, senior research fellow at the Population Foundation of India, says that the rising internal migration from the North to the South is a direct result of low fertility rates in the southern states. "Labour shortages are the most immediate impact and will only worsen in the future," he adds.

Another major consequence is the shrinking youth population and the rise of an ageing demographic. For instance, Retna Kumar notes that in Kerala's Pathanamthitta district, which has the lowest fertility rate in India, the population is increasingly elderly. School closures due to declining student numbers, along with the contraction of businesses catering to young consumers, are among the visible effects of low fertility. The district offers, in miniature, a glimpse of the future that the rest of southern India may be heading toward.

Political conversation

Such in-migration from the North is stirring an uncomfortable political conversation. Rajan draws a sharp analogy: "You have Little India in Singapore. What is wrong with having Little West Bengal in Kerala? You also have Little Kerala in Delhi. Migrants will always be present—they have resilience."

Labour migration from northern to southern states is becoming a prominent feature of regional demographic and economic patterns. Historical instances of nativist rhetoric in states such as Maharashtra and Assam indicate the potential for cultural tensions to influence policy and public discourse. How southern state governments manage the balance between labour demand and social integration will be an important factor in shaping domestic policy frameworks over the next decade.

"Initially, migrants were mostly in construction and factories; now they even dominate traditional sectors like fishing," Peter says. "In this scenario, Kerala rarely sees disputes between locals and migrant workers, as the real issue is an acute shortage of local labour for demanding jobs," he adds. In this view, the North is not competing with the South; it is keeping it functioning.

"The danger," Peter says, "is not economic displacement but social friction." He cites a lynching incident in Palakkad district in December 2025, in which 31-year-old Ram Narayan Baghel, a native of Chhattisgarh, was killed by a mob that mistook him for a thief. While an isolated incident, it serves as a chilling reminder that integrating lakhs of northern workers into southern communities is as much a social challenge as an economic one, and a challenge that has only just begun.

Straining finances

The demographic reality of low fertility inevitably leads to an older population. With fewer young people entering the workforce, the dependency ratio rises — each working-age adult must support more elderly citizens. For southern states, which have built generous welfare systems, this is not an abstract concern but a slow-moving fiscal reckoning.

Rajan calculates that 20% of voters in Tamil Nadu and Kerala are elderly — a constituency large enough to influence elections, yet one that governments still often view as a welfare burden rather than an economic asset. He proposes a new perspective of the "silver dividend", an idea that an engaged, empowered elderly population can contribute productively to growth instead of draining it.

He draws a careful distinction between age groups that policymakers often lump together. The "young-old" (60–70) are largely independent; the "old-old" (70–80) need modest support; and only the "oldest-old" (80 and above) require intensive care. Treating all elderly as dependent, he argues, is both economically wasteful and empirically inaccurate.

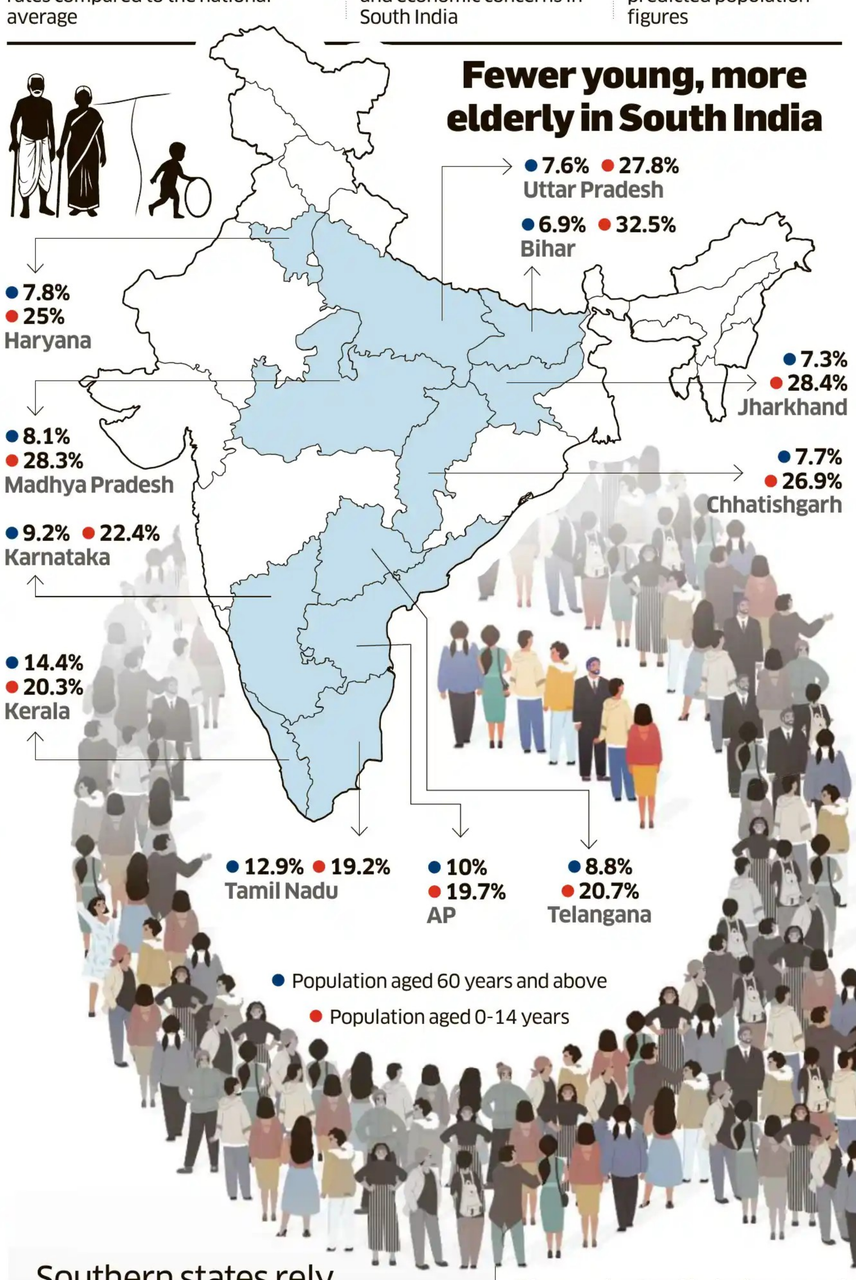
"If you empower and engage the elderly, you can achieve high growth without waiting for 2047 — the year often cited as the point when India's demographic dividend will peak. You don't need to wait for young people; mobilise the resources you already have. Most of the elderly are women, and bringing them into the workforce represents your gender dividend," he says.

Southern states are beginning to confront the demographic shifts expected over the next two decades. With a shrinking youth population and a growing elderly cohort, labour and social policies will need to adapt. Key areas include facilitating workforce participation among women, leveraging the potential of older workers, integrating migrant labour effectively, and recalibrating public spending to reflect changing population dynamics. How policymakers address these challenges will shape the region's economic and social resilience in the coming decades.

(With inputs from Arjun Raghunath in Thiruvananthapuram)

WIDENING REGIONAL DIVIDE

- The five southern states, accounting for about 20% of India's population, are more developed, economically prosperous, and have lower fertility and population growth rates compared to the national average
- Widening demographic and economic differences between India's more and less developed states are beginning to fuel policy and economic concerns in South India
- Southern states fear losing political representation if Lok Sabha seats are redrawn after 2026 based on predicted population figures



South India leads India's fertility decline (TFR)

States	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023
AP	2.2	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.5
Karnataka	2.3	2	1.9	1.7	1.5
Kerala	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.5
Tamil Nadu	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.3
Telangana	-	-	1.6	1.6	1.5
Bihar	4.2	3.9	3.4	3.2	2.8
Chhattisgarh	–	3	2.6	2.4	2.2
Jharkhand	–	3.2	2.7	2.5	2.1
Madhya Pradesh	3.8	3.3	2.9	2.7	2.4
Rajasthan	3.8	3.3	2.8	2.5	2.3
Uttar Pradesh	4.4	3.8	3.1	2.9	2.6
India	**3**	**2.6**	**2.3**	**2.2**	**1.9**

*Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is the average number of children that a woman will have in her lifetime

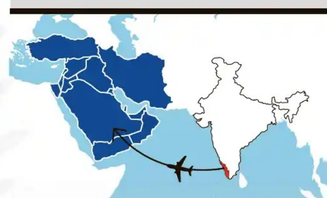
Uttar Pradesh, Bihar account for 63% of emigration clearances

Number of emigration clearance* issued (2021 to Nov 2024)

0.55 L Andhra Pradesh	2.17L Bihar	0.60L Kerala	0.87L Rajasthan
0.79L Tamil Nadu	4.26L Uttar Pradesh	0.99L West Bengal	0.35L Telangana

*Emigration clearance is an official authorisation needed for certain Indian passport holders to work abroad

Kerala sending fewer people to Gulf countries



Over the past decade, Kerala has seen a **90%** decline in migration to the Middle East for work

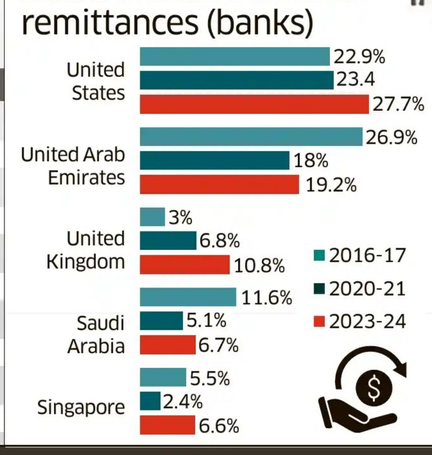
- Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are emerging as major suppliers of blue-collar workers to the Gulf region
- Uttar Pradesh has become the single largest state in terms of emigration clearance for Gulf-bound workers
- Uttar Pradesh and Bihar together accounted for around 63% of all emigration clearances issued between 2021 and Nov 2024

Southern states rely more on remittances

India's inward remittances

Destination state	2016-17	2020-21	2023-24
Maharashtra	16.7%	35.2%	20.5%
Kerala	19%	10.2%	19.7%
Tamil Nadu	8%	9.7%	10.4%
Karnataka	15%	5.2%	7.7%
Andhra Pradesh	4%	4.4%	4.4%
Delhi NCT	5.9%	9.3%	4.3%
Uttar Pradesh	3.1%	3.7%	3%
Bihar	1.3%	1.4%	1.3%
Madhya Pradesh	0.4%	0.5%	0.9%
Jharkhand	0.3%	1.9%	0.4%

Share in India's inward remittances (banks)



Shift in remittance dynamics

- India's remittances have more than doubled, rising from $55.6 bn in 2010–11 to $118.7 bn in 2023–24, with southern states remaining more dependent on these inflows
- The share of advanced economies in India's inward remittances has risen, surpassing the share of Gulf economies
- While most Indian migrants in the UAE have blue-collar jobs, those in the US hold white-collar positions, explaining higher remittances from the US despite fewer migrants

The political debate

Southern states are apprehensive about population-based delimitation of Lok Sabha seats

With Lok Sabha seats fixed at 543, a post-2026 delimitation could give Uttar Pradesh and Bihar 11 and 10 additional seats, while Tamil Nadu and Kerala may lose eight each

An increase in seats to 848 would disproportionately benefit populous states, despite less populous states' economic contribution

UP, Bihar lead labour migration

- In 2025, India recorded 15 crore inter-state migrant workers, accounting for 30% of the total workforce of 50 crore
- Maharashtra, Gujarat and Delhi are the primary destinations for migrant workers, followed by Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu
- Over one-third of migrant workers originate from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar
- Each of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh sends fewer than 25 lakh migrant workers to other states
- Internal migration of workers from Telangana, Kerala, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Haryana is minimal

India's migration trends

Share of the workforce comprising migrant workers

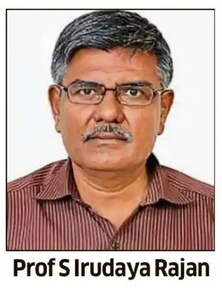
60% Delhi
50% Maharashtra
45% Gujarat
40% Karnataka
35% Tamil Nadu
30% Kerala
25% Goa
20% Telangana
8% Uttar Pradesh
8% Madhya Pradesh
7% Chhattisgarh
6% Jharkhand
1% Bihar
<5% Northeastern states
30% National average

Source: MEA, Handbook of Statistics on Indian States by RBI, Indiadatamap.com, RBI.org.in, Paper on 'Changing Patterns of Indian Out-Migration to GCC Countries: A Sociological Perspective', Sample Registration System 2021, 'India's Migrants: Exclusion by Design' in India Forum, Huntr report, 'Delimitation of Constituencies in India: Southern States Up in Arms', media reports

Compiled by Divyashri Mudakavi
DH infographic: RAMU MASTAIAH

Policy, not cash, is the key to reviving fertility in the South

In an interview with *DH*'s **SNV Sudhir**, demography and migration expert **Prof S Irudaya Rajan** says that clear policy interventions, not financial incentives, are the only credible way to address southern India's declining fertility rate. Excerpts:



Prof S Irudaya Rajan

Why is the total fertility rate so low in southern states?

It's a combination of economics and profound social change. Children have become liabilities rather than assets. Unlike in the past, parents today invest in a child for 25 years before seeing any return — and often that return leaves the country when children migrate abroad. There is simply no economic payoff. Childcare, which was once freely provided through extended family networks, is now a paid service. With grandmothers no longer nearby, women in cities face a lack of support, making a second or third child extremely costly in both time and money.

Could a shrinking working-age population reduce remittances?

Not in the next 20 years. The nature of migration is changing, not declining. Earlier, Kerala sent ten unskilled workers to the Gulf and earned $1,000. Today, it sends three skilled professionals and earns $1,200 — quality has replaced quantity. Meanwhile, unskilled migrants from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar fill the gap. Southern states are moving up the skills ladder, and the remittance pipeline remains strong.

What is the way forward?

Stop looking at people as problems. They are all resources waiting to be engaged. That is the real demographic dividend southern India must now claim.

A credential trap, from Page 1

Rethinking employment: Education, enterprise and growth

The persistence of graduate unemployment reflects a deeper failure of labour demand. Growth has been driven by within-sector productivity gains, not structural transformation. Labour has not moved into manufacturing and modern services at scale.

Employment elasticity patterns illustrate this clearly. Construction (0.60) and services (0.43) absorb labour, while manufacturing remains weak at 0.22.

Where are the jobs?

Jobs are growing in low-productivity sectors, while areas that could employ educated workers remain underdeveloped.

Analysis of Labour Bureau wage data shows near-stagnant real wages between 2014–15 and 2023–24. Agricultural wages grew by just 0.8% annually for men and 1.1% for women, while non-agricultural wages remained virtually flat. This points to a structural decoupling, where economic growth has failed to translate into meaningful income gains for workers.

The rapid expansion of gig work suggests that labour is increasingly being absorbed into precarious, low-security employment.

With nearly three-quarters of employment remaining informal, job creation often fails to translate into stable income pathways.

Headline indicators mask this stress.

As of February 2026, the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) reports an overall unemployment rate of 4.9 per cent and urban unemployment at 6.6 per cent. But this stability is compositional: unemployment is increasingly concentrated among the educated.

Structural constraint

India is not experiencing jobless growth, it is experiencing misdirected growth, where output expands without creating jobs that match the skills of its workforce.

This limitation stems from the structure of India's enterprise base.

Over 80 per cent of MSMEs operate as micro-enterprises, and nearly 81 per cent function as proprietorships. Across all organisational forms, more than 90 per cent of MSMEs remain at the micro level.

PLFS-linked data show that 74.3 per cent of workers in proprietary and partnership firms are employed in the non-agricultural informal sector.

The informal sector contributed about 45 per cent of GDP in 2022–23, despite employing a much larger share of workers, reflecting a persistent productivity gap that limits the effective use of educated labour.

In such an ecosystem, firms are too small, informal and credit-constrained to generate stable, high-quality employment at scale. Their limited capacity for investment, technological upgrading and formalisation constrains both productivity and wage growth, capping the economy's ability to absorb an increasingly educated workforce.

Public investment has not corrected this imbalance. Despite capital expenditure exceeding Rs 11 trillion in FY25, investment remains skewed towards capital-intensive sectors, with 57 per cent of projects concentrated in manufacturing, limiting its ability to generate employment suited to India's increasingly educated workforce.

Education as household risk

Weakening employment outcomes are shifting the burden of adjustment onto households, with the poorest most exposed to risk.

The State of Working India report finds that the cost of pursuing professional degrees like engineering and medicine often exceeds the annual per-capita household expenditure of poorer households.

Higher education is no longer merely an investment in mobility; it has become a high-stakes financial gamble, increasingly underwritten not by public provisioning but by household risk.

This shift is reflected in credit patterns. A Parliamentary Standing Committee review shows that while the number of education loans has declined from 23 lakh in 2014 to 21 lakh in 2025, total borrowing has surged from Rs 52,327 crore in 2014 to Rs 1.37 lakh crore in 2025 indicating rising indebtedness per student.

From credentials to capability

India's growth story is increasingly marked by a paradox: rising educational attainment coexisting with a declining ability to convert it into meaningful employment.

As the World Bank notes, India has not created sufficient "more and better jobs" to absorb its growing workforce, with employment growth largely confined to low-productivity sectors. In this context, education serves less as a signal of productivity and more as a marker of relative social and economic standing.

This raises a deeper question: is India shifting from a model of credential-driven security towards one that rewards risk-taking and enterprise-building? While policy discourse increasingly highlights entrepreneurship, structural constraints persist, access to credit remains uneven, firms are often small, and income security is limited.

The danger lies not only in rising youth unemployment but also in the erosion of faith that higher education guarantees a better life, both in qualitative and secure terms. Without a shift towards employment-intensive growth and stronger institutional support for labour absorption, India risks its demographic dividend becoming a structural liability.

(Deepanshu Mohan is Professor and Dean, OP Jindal Global University. Sakshyam Raj, a research analyst at the Centre for New Economics Studies, OP Jindal Global University, contributed to this article)

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Chocobar Probiotic Gold
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Frostik Gold
70 mL / ₹45*

EPIC Choco Almond Gold
80 mL / ₹100*

Sandwich Gold Chocolate Brownie
80 mL / ₹40*

Sundae Chocolate
125 mL / ₹35*

Black Forest Cake
500 mL / ₹350*

Chocochips
1 L / ₹230*

Tiramisu Gold
1 L / ₹350*

FAN FAVOURITES

Sugar Free Vanilla With Choco Sauce
125 mL / ₹40*

Creme Rich Caramel
125 mL / ₹50*

Protein Ice Cream Bar
60 mL / ₹160*

EPIC Strawberry Twist Gold
80 mL / ₹100*

Bitter Chocolate Tricone
100 mL / ₹35*

Coffee Gold Tricone
120 mL / ₹40*

Chocolate Brownie
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Choco Crackle
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Caramel Chocolate Gold
1 L / ₹260*

Cake Magic Dark Chocolate
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CARE PATROL Scheme sends officers for weekly elder visits, beyond crime prevention

Bengaluru's Aasare: Police step in for lonely seniors

ASHWIN BM
BENGALURU, DHNS

Shravana Kumara, the mythical paragon of filial devotion from the Ramayana, carried his blind parents in baskets on his shoulders across the country to fulfil their longing for pilgrimage.

Bengaluru, once a pensioner's paradise, has little room for such devotion today.

The proverbial yoke has been replaced by smartphone screens, and the devotion of children has often been swapped for a quick property or bank transfer.

In a world turning increasingly robotic and emotionless, police are stepping into the role of the devoted guardian.

The twilight of loneliness

India grapples with a demographic shift where over 10% of the population — roughly 104 million people — are seniors, with life expectancy exceeding 70 years.

NITI Aayog projects that nearly 20% of India will be elderly by 2050.

The reality for thousands in Bengaluru is that globalisation has created a diaspora of the young, leaving parents in big houses in Jayanagar, Banashankari or Girinagar while children pursue their dreams.

Nagamma, 81, a resident of Girinagar, has been alone for 16 years. Her mother passed away in 2005, and her husband preceded her. She remains independent, paying her own bills at BangaloreOne and cooking her own meals, but the vulnerability of her solitude is obvious.

"I do not go poking my nose into others' business," she says. Yet, when she travelled to Rameshwaram, it was not a relative who checked on her home — it was the police.

Aasare: The shield of khaki

Recognising this emotional and physical vacuum, the Karnataka state police have revamped the Aasare scheme.

"Under Aasare, we must accept the reality of the current nuclear family scenario," says Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Lokesh B Jagalasar. "When life slows down, seniors feel ignored and, frequently, incapable of accessing essential services."

Police visit them to address four key areas: whether they face any nuisance in the neighbourhood; whether they are being targeted by scams or fraudulent promises; whether their domestic help has been verified by police; and whether they face obstacles in accessing government services.

"If obstacles exist, our booth officers inform the departments concerned. Once these houses are identified, we increase police presence and patrolling to prevent theft, burglary and robbery," he added.

The programme is a direct response to data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), which recorded 458 complaints of crimes against seniors in Bengaluru in 2022. Alone, they are easy prey for domestic help, fraudulent middlemen and cybercriminals.

Aasare — which translates to support — assigns a Community Police Officer to every station. Their task is to identify households where seniors live alone and provide a weekly check-in, looking not just for burglars but for leaking gas cylinders, unpaid bills, and signs of elder abuse by relatives.

Vijayalakshmi, 74, a resident of Banashankari for four decades, recounts how the scheme helped her during a minor crisis. "When my gas cylinder was empty and I needed help, I was able to call and get assistance. It gives me peace knowing they are looking out for me," she says.

For some, however, the intervention of the state will always be limited.

Grateful, but philosophical

Vardhaman, 76, and Rajamma, 74, of Dwarakanagar are grateful but philosophical.

"Police can help us when we need it, but what about our emotional needs or our healthcare?" Vardhaman asks. "If something happens suddenly, like a heart attack, only children can shower us with that true love and closeness. This police initiative is helpful, but in an artificial or mechanical way. We are losing values and morality is deteriorating rapidly. We are becoming slaves, technological slaves."

DCP Jagalasar says: "We are now educating them on digital safety. We tell them, 'If you have a doubt, call us, and we will guide you'."

Perhaps the most heart-wrenching aspect of the police's new role is mediating between parents and their own children.

Where children attempt to evict parents to seize property, police coordinate with the Revenue Department under the Senior Citizens Protection Act to restore property rights.

Police educate seniors on staying safe in the digital world. DH PHOTO/BK JANARDHAN

DGP lauds scheme safeguarding elders

In a chat with *DH*, **DG&IGP MA Saleem** discusses the Aasare scheme and its impact on senior citizen safety.

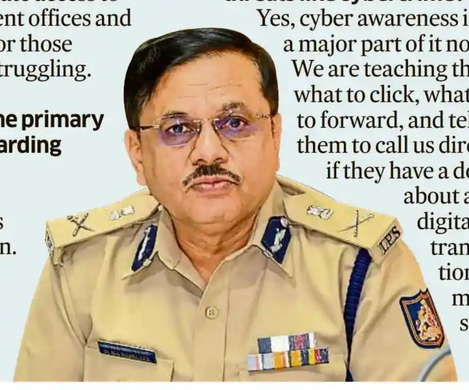
How did the Aasare initiative take root?
It dates to around 1999 to 2000, when I was serving as the superintendent of police in Hassan and Udupi. We have since revamped and expanded it to cover the entire state. The statewide initiative was launched on January 17.

How many households have been identified so far?
Across the state, we have identified approximately 20,000 houses where senior citizens are living alone or without immediate family support. In the city, the number is around 839, being mapped by beat police.

What services do police provide during visits?
Beat police visit these homes at least once a week. They check on well-being, address harassment, help pay bills, and facilitate access to government offices and services for those who are struggling.

What is the primary focus regarding crime?
The first strategy is prevention. Visible police presence and regular visits deter criminals who look for easy targets. It is also about building trust. Unless people have confidence in the department, policing is difficult. This programme promotes that trust.

Are there measures for threats like cybercrime?
Yes, cyber awareness is a major part of it now. We are teaching them what to click, what not to forward, and telling them to call us directly if they have a doubt about a digital transaction or message.



CALL TO REGISTER

Senior citizens living alone can register under the Aasare initiative by calling 9480801500. For emergencies, dial 112.

IPL ticket scam drains Rs 1.46 lakh from techie, mother

Fake promises lured victim into multiple UPI transfers

BENGALURU, DHNS

A 25-year-old software professional from B Narayanapura lost Rs 1.46 lakh to a fraudster posing as an IPL ticket seller on Instagram.

The suspect claimed to be Sumit Biswal, a senior supervisor at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium ticket counter, and promised the victim match tickets along with food coupons.

The victim was persuaded to transfer the money in multiple UPI transactions — from his own account and his mother's account.

Despite paying Rs 1.46 lakh, he received neither the tickets nor a refund.

The victim was promised not just match tickets, but VIP benefits — food coupons and extra ID cards for friends — for the RCB Vs CSK match scheduled for Sunday.

He has since filed a complaint with the Mahadevapura police.

"He asked me to come near the stadium's Gate No 10, saying someone would deliver the tickets within minutes, and even sent an email confirmation to gain my trust. Initially, I agreed to buy two tickets for Rs 3,700 each, but he kept asking for more money under various pretexts such as refundable security deposits, additional ID cards and food coupons.

"Trusting him, I made multiple payments — even using my mother's bank account after exhausting my own limits — and ended up transferring around Rs 1.46 lakh," the complainant told *DH*.

The victim called the cybercrime helpline and reported the incident. Based on the complaint, police have registered a case and frozen the bank account used by the suspect, a senior officer said.

The suspect sent fake tickets to gain the victim's trust, promising that the advance payment would later be refunded in cash.

Insta fraudster cons over 30

The person who allegedly sold the tickets has around 16,000 followers on Instagram.

"He got to know I had filed a police complaint and that his bank account had been frozen. He continued chatting with me and pressured me to withdraw the complaint, promising a full refund.

"However, I came to know that he cheated more than 30 people on the same day and had already withdrawn part of the money. By the time I realised and tried to contact the cyber helpline, it was too late. I was in shock after losing a huge amount," the victim said.

'IPL Dhamaka Sale'

Hulimavu police on Saturday registered a case after a cybercrime investigator found fake IPL tickets being sold on Facebook and other social media platforms.

The post, titled 'IPL Dhamaka Sale', falsely claimed that tickets were available for the RCB Vs CSK match at Chinnaswamy Stadium, despite having been sold out, and included a link to contact the sellers.

Police have registered the complaint and are working to trace the suspects.

Tax dept DEO booked for forging summons, misusing officer's digital signature

BENGALURU, DHNS: A Data Entry Operator (DEO) with the Commercial Taxes Department has been booked for forging official documents and misusing a Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) to obtain bank records of a private firm.

Koramangala police registered a case against Surya Aras based on a complaint by a Commercial Tax Officer from the Office of the Additional Commissioner of Commercial Taxes (Enforcement), South Zone.

The director of Man Power Assets Private Limited alleged that his firm's SBI account statements were accessed without authorisation using the DSC of Ravishankar, Commercial Tax Officer (Vigilance-20), along with an official seal. A departmental inquiry conducted by the Deputy Commissioner of Commercial Taxes traced the activity to Aras, a DEO hired on contract.

Aras allegedly created a fake summons dated September 19, 2025, despite no official file related to the firm being available in the office.

He forged the vigilance officer's digital signature, affixed the office seal, and submitted the fabricated documents to a bank in Vijayanagar to obtain the firm's account statements and KYC documents.

The department terminated him from service following the inquiry. "We are verifying the forged documents and have sought forensic reports to investigate the case. We are ascertaining the motive for accessing the firm's bank records," a police officer investigating the case said.

Teen driver kills 19-yr-old biker in late-night crash

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 19-year-old boy was killed after a speeding car, allegedly driven by a drunk teenager, rammed into his motorcycle late on Friday night.

Police said the incident occurred on 10th Main Road in Maruthinagar, Malleshpalya, around 11 pm.

Prateek was heading home on his Royal Enfield motorcycle when an Innova car crashed into the rear of his motorcycle. He sustained grievous head injuries and died on the spot.

JB Nagar traffic police took the car driver, Arpith, 19, into custody. A breathalyser test confirmed that Arpith was driving under the influence of alcohol at the time of the crash. "The suspect was driving recklessly and failed to notice the biker ahead. We have seized the car and subjected the driver to a medical test, which returned positive for alcohol consumption," a senior police officer said.

Police have registered a case of hit and run and death due to negligence under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Motor Vehicles Act.

Accident near airport toll gate

A 31-year-old man died after being struck by a car near the airport road toll plaza in Chikkajala around 11.45 pm on Friday. Prashanth, a private bank employee living in Thigalarapalya, Hoodi, died at the spot after the speeding car hit his two-wheeler on the service road.

Chikkajala police visited the scene and registered a case against the car driver.

Mobile thefts during IPL: 9 more suspects held; 75 phones recovered

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bengaluru police have made further arrests in connection with mobile phone thefts reported at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium during the IPL opener on March 28.

The total number of arrests in the case has now risen to 13, including nine juveniles, according to police.

Based on information provided by the prime suspect, Shubham Kumar, police arrested Sohan Kumar, 21, Sanjeeth Kumar, 24, Eshal Kumar, 23, along with six juveniles.

Shubham, a native of Jharkhand, was arrested on March 31 along with three minors, two days after the thefts were reported. At the time, police had recovered 21 mobile phones worth Rs 18 lakh.

In subsequent operations carried out until April 3, police recovered a total of 75 mobile phones.

A city court has remanded the adult suspects to police custody for further interrogation, while the juveniles have been sent to an observation home, a police officer said.

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3 ರಿಂದ 14 ಏಪ್ರಿಲ್ 2026 ರವರೆಗೆ
ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 10.30 ರಿಂದ ರಾತ್ರಿ 9.00 ರವರೆಗೆ
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HC orders state to appoint trio as work inspectors

BENGALURU, DHNS

The High Court of Karnataka has directed the state government to appoint three candidates as 'Work Inspectors' within two months.

In case the state amends the 2011 rules to abolish the 'Work Inspector' cadre, the government may merge the petitioners' posts with an equivalent cadre.

A division bench of Justice DK Singh and Justice S Rachaiah issued this direction while allowing a writ appeal filed by HP Harish Kumar, Vishwanath, and Hampanna Kolakar.

The appellants had appeared for the competitive examination conducted by the Karnataka State Public Service Commission (KPSC). The final select list, published in September 2017, showed the petitioners' names at serial numbers 4, 6, and 2, respectively.

Meanwhile, the 'Work Inspector' cadre was abolished and removed from the Cadre and Recruitment Rules of the Public Works Department.

In a petition filed by the other candidates, the Director of the Department of Municipal Administration submitted an affidavit stating that since the KPSC had already published the final select list, candidates who had secured more than 25% marks would be considered for appointment. It was further stated that if the cadre was abolished, eligible candidates could be merged into an equivalent cadre.

The petitioners — Harish, Vishwanath, and Hampanna — who had secured more than 25% marks, submitted a representation seeking appointment. However, their request was denied by the Director of Municipal Administration, as the post had been abolished by a government order dated January 5, 2021.

They then moved the division bench, challenging the February 24, 2025, single bench order that had dismissed their petition. The single bench had ruled that the petitioners were not entitled to appointment, even though they had secured more than 25% marks, since the state government had decided to abolish the 'Work Inspector' cadre.

The division bench noted that the 2021 government order was a policy decision and could only take effect through an amendment to the rules. "Therefore, we reject the contention that the government can abolish the post/cadre through an executive decision without amending the statutory rules," the bench ruled.

The bench further stated: "The director-respondent No 2, in his affidavit filed in WP No 3077/2019, reiterated the government's decision to appoint candidates who had secured more than 25% marks in the selection process. Therefore, we believe the petitioners had a legitimate expectation, based on the prior conduct and explicit assurance of the government, that they would be appointed, given they had secured more than 25% marks in the selection process."

Brothers arrested for murder in drunken brawl, likely over love rivalry

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 22-year-old man was stabbed to death by two brothers following a drunken brawl in JC Nagar in northern Bengaluru in the early hours of Saturday.

The deceased, Vijay, a resident of Chamarajpet, worked as a marriage band artist.

Police suspect the brothers — Kiran, 23, and Vinod, 29, — attacked Vijay with a knife following a quarrel in Mathadahalli on Friday night. Vijay, who was visiting his aunt, allegedly abused Vinod over a trivial issue and assaulted him.

Vinod informed his brother Kiran, who called Vijay near a bar for talks. Vijay reportedly tried to assault Vinod again, following which the brothers stabbed him and fled after confirming his death.

Kiran had prior enmity with Vijay over a woman. Though Vijay was married, he allegedly continued to harass his former lover, who is now in a relationship with Kiran. Police suspect this was the primary motive for the murder.

Police have ruled out allegations that a minor road rage incident — involving motorbikes brushing against each other — had triggered the attack, saying it may have only led to the initial quarrel.

JC Nagar police have arrested both suspects.

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◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Felicitation for UPSC Rank Holders: Inauguration by Justice Shivaraj V Patil; Guests include Raghavendra Auradkar and Hanumantha; Presided over by Chandrakantha Bhandare; Kalyan Karnataka Residents' Educational and Cultural Association; Engineers' Bhavan, PWD Complex, KR Circle; 10.30 am.

Convention on Democracy and Political Values to mark the birth centenary of MS Krishnan: 'M D Harigovinda' book release; Guests include B R Patil, Babu Mathew, G Ramakrishna and Siddanagouda Patil; Presided over by Dr Vasundhara Bhupathi; Bapu Hall, Gandhi Bhavan, Kumara Krupa Road; 10.30 am.

Karnataka State Devanga Women's Awareness Convention: Presence of Dayanandapuri Swami; Felicitation of SG Susheelamma, Umashree and Asha K Nagappa Shetty; Inauguration by Preeti Vinayak Kamakar; Special issue release by Gayatri Ramakrishna; Karnataka State Devanga Employees' Association; Ravindra Kalakshetra, JC Road; 10 am.

Endowment Lecture on Science and History: 'Fixing Science in India: A Socio-Economic Prescription' by Gautam R Desiraju and 'Kumudendu Muni's Siribhoovalaya' by Sudharthi Hassan; The Mythic Society, Nrupathunga Road; 11 am.

Book Launch - 'Badukabani Moorudhwani': Release of 'Chetana Bharati' by Bharati Vastrad, 'Midu Maatu' by Rashmi S and 'Echoes from my Jar' by Arni C Naveen; inauguration by Ravindra Bhat; book introduction by N Ravishankar; Kondajji Basappa Auditorium, Scouts and Guides, Palace Road; 10.30 am.

CULTURAL

'Music for a Mission' Classical Concert: Vocal performance by Vidyabhushana; Guests include C Somashekar, S Shadakshari, and G Mohan; Lions Club of Bangalore Sankalpa; ADA Rangamandira, JC Road; 5.30 pm.

'Weekend' drama festival: 'Annana Nenapu' play to be staged by Hanu Ramasanjeeva and team; Pravara Theatre; KEA Prabhat Rangamandira, Kamalanagar, Basaveshwaranagar; 6.30 pm.

RELIGIOUS

33rd Sri Rama Navami Music Festival: 'Srirama Kaarunya' award presentation and felicitation at 9 am; Veena concert by Suma Sudhindra, Nalina Mohan (violin), Anoor Anantharkrishna Sharma (mridangam) and SN Narayanamurthy (ghatam) at 10.30 am; Namasankeerthana by Udayalur Kalyanarama at 6.30 pm; Srivani Kala Kendra, Basaveshwaranagar.

88th Sri Rama Navami Music Festival: Foundation Day celebrations; Concert by Ranjani and Gayatri, Charumathi Raghuram, Delhi Sairam, and S Krishna; Sree Ramaseva Mandali Ramanavami Celebrations Trust; Fort High School Grounds, Chamarajpet; 5 pm.

Invites to be published in this column should be sent to: **incitytoday@deccanherald.co.in.** Please note that hard copies will not be accepted

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	31.8°C
Minimum	23.4°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	42%
Sunset (April 5)	6:31 pm
Sunrise (April 6)	6:14 am
Moonrise	8:26 pm
Moonset	7:25 am

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

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Auto LPG crisis: Cops patrol gas stations as drivers spat over long queues

Pumps told to close during peak hours over traffic concerns

ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

The LPG crisis in Bengaluru has taken a turn for the worse as thousands of auto-rickshaw drivers spent another day in long queues, often stretching over a kilometre, only to be met with "no stock" boards or rationed fuel.

The situation turned volatile at several points on Saturday, forcing the jurisdictional police to deploy Hoysala patrolling units at fuel stations in Seshadripuram and Domlur to prevent skirmishes between frustrated drivers and bunk staff.

Chaos at the pumps

At the Seshadripuram LPG station, the queue spilled onto the main road as early as 4 am. Despite the long wait, drivers were informed that they could only refill for a maximum of Rs 500 - which buys just about 5 kg of auto LPG with a 200 km mileage - to ensure the limited stock reached more vehicles.

Auto-rickshaws line up outside a fuel station at Padmanabhanagar in Bengaluru. DH PHOTO/PRASHANTH HG

"I have been waiting for three hours. They say they won't do a full tank. How am I supposed to run a full day's shift with Rs 500 worth of gas?" asked Manjunath, an auto driver. "Yesterday, I managed only four liters. My daily earnings have dropped from Rs 1,500 to barely Rs 700, and half of that goes back into the tank."

Similar scenes were witnessed in Rajajinagar and Yeshwanthpur. At the Indian Oil outlet nearby, the queue went through the inner lanes, making a U-turn at the dead end before reaching the dispensing unit.

Police deployed personnel to maintain order following instances of heated arguments and physical altercations over the last two days. "The frustration is obvious, and our priority is to prevent any untoward incidents," a senior police officer said.

Many drivers reported sleeping in their vehicles overnight to secure a spot in the morning queue.

"I haven't been home in three days. If I leave the queue, I lose my spot. If I don't get gas, I can't pay my son's college fees or the house rent," said another driver. Some drivers even lamented that begging in front of temples seemed like a more viable option than struggling for fuel that doesn't exist.

As long queues of auto-rickshaws continue to paralyse major arterial roads, the Seshadripuram traffic police have issued an official notice to fuel stations contributing to the gridlock. They also served a notice on an auto gas station located on Platform Road.

The move comes after thousands of auto-rickshaws lined up for fuel, completely blocking vehicle movement. In order to manage the peak-hour congestion, police ordered the gas station to remain closed during the following high-traffic intervals: 8 am to 11 am and 5 pm to 8 pm.

The authorities have threatened to file cases under Section 285 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for negligent conduct with respect to explosive or flammable substances causing danger to the public.

Divyashree S, Abhishek Sriram and Sneha T, who bagged gold medals at the fifth convocation of Dr Manmohan Singh Bengaluru City University, in Bengaluru on Saturday.

'Nearly 25% of the current workforce may be jobless by 2027'

DRDO director general stresses mastery on new tech

BENGALURU, DHNS:

Although nearly 25% of the current workforce may be left unemployed by 2027, they must not despair and instead rise to meet the challenge, advised Director General (Electronics & Communication Systems) of DRDO Binay Kumar Das at 5th convocation of Dr Manmohan Singh Bengaluru City University on Saturday.

Delivering the convocation address, Das said, "Those of the new generation may have to change career three or four times. So, one must accept change and be ready to re-adjust."

Emphasising the need to work on and develop disruptive technologies, Das observed mastery over new technologies held the key to elevating India to a prominent position on global stage.

Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot sought to remind the youth of their role in ensuring India achieved its goal of being a developed nation by 2047.

"If youngsters are equipped with knowledge, skills, values and national spirit, India will surely attain prominent position in global community," the governor said.

Honorary doctorates were conferred on former cricketer B K Venkatesh Prasad, music director Arjun Janya, educationist T K Narayanappa, MLC Govindaraj, educationist Mohan Alva and entrepreneur-politician Bava Mohammad Farooq.

Minister for Higher Education Dr M C Sudhakar was absent at the ceremony. Sources said he was engaged in campaigning for byelections.

As many as 37,393 students – 29,880 undergraduates and 7,484 postgraduates – were awarded their degrees at the convocation ceremony, with 64 gold medals being presented.

While 71 secured ranks, 23 PhD scholars were awarded their doctorate.

Woman gang-raped while defecating in open, two held

YADGIR, DHNS: Two youths were arrested on charges of gang-raping a woman when she went out in a field to defecate at a village in the taluk on Saturday.

The suspects, Basappa Ningappa (25) & Reddappa Ganjalappa (30), were arrested by the women's police. They waylaid the woman when she was returning home and took her to a field, where they raped her.

272 illegal foreigners deported from Bengaluru

BENGALURU, DHNS: In a major crackdown on illegal immigration, the Central Crime Branch (CCB) deported 272 foreigners found residing illegally in Bengaluru.

The operation, conducted between March 18 and April 4, targeted several areas of the city, including Channasandra, Kengeri, Bommanahalli, and Attibele.

The group comprised 168 men, 94 women, and 12 children, including citizens of Bangladesh, Nigeria, Uganda, and Rwanda. Investigations revealed that most were employed as daily wage labourers and domestic helpers, a senior police officer said.

The CCB also dismantled a three-tier human trafficking network involving middlemen. The syndicate operated across borders: one agent recruited migrants in Bangladesh, a second facilitated illegal crossings into India, and a third managed their housing and employment in Bengaluru. Two key middlemen based in the city have been arrested.

The intensified drive follows a directive from the Union government to identify and deport undocumented immigrants across the country.

Rajasthan man visiting city hacked to death in Varthur

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 26-year-old man was hacked to death by unidentified assailants in Belagere, near Varthur in east Bengaluru, around midnight on Friday.

Police identified the deceased as Dala Ram, a native of Rajasthan's Pali district.

According to a senior police officer associated with the investigation, Ram was attacked with lethal weapons by a group of assailants who arrived in two cars and fled immediately after the incident.

Members of the public later found his body lying in a pool of blood and alerted the police.

Preliminary investigations revealed that Ram had arrived in Bengaluru a week ago and was staying with a relative in Belagere.

"His family had an ongoing dispute with relatives following a fight during a village festival over a financial issue. We are treating this as a probable motive for the murder," the officer said.

Varthur police have registered a case of murder and formed a special team to trace the assailants.

Unable to find bride, shepherd dies by suicide

ALMATTI (VIJAYAPURA DISTRICT), DHNS: A shepherd ended his life by hanging himself from a tree at his farm after he failed to find a bride, at Chimmalagi village near Almatti in Bagalkot district on Thursday.

According to the police, Shankar Talawar (25) was upset after the bride cancelled engagement two years back. After his efforts to find a suitable girl for marriage for the past two years failed, Shankar went into a depression mode and took the drastic step, the police said.

The Nidagundi police have registered a case.

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OPEN TENDER NOTICE NO. BE-29-2025-26-OT-37 (through E-Tendering)

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SN	Tender No.	Description of work	Approx. Value
1	BE-29-2025-26-OT-37	Annual Maintenance contract for water coolers and AC Plants over Bengaluru Division for 2 years **Period of Comp. (Month) : 24 Months**	Rs. 61,03,512/-

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Office of The Executive Engineer,

Panchayat Raj Engineering Divison, Sagara.

No.: EE/PRE/DS/Soraba/Sagara/Hosanagara/KW-1,2&3/AE/JE/2026-27/ Date: 02.04.2026

Tender Notice (Through "K.P.P.P.")

On behalf of the Governor of Karnataka, Executive Engineer, Panchayat Raj Engineering Divison, Sagara invites Itemwar e-Tender subject to KW-1,2&3 (Standard Tender Document) Rules from eligible, contractors registered in Public Works Department and Registered in "K.P.P.P." Institution for the works under Chief Minister's Infrastructure Development Project (C.M.I.D.P.), 4202-01-201-1-08-139, 2059-00-101-0-26(051) for the year 2025-26 and Pradhan Mantri Adarsha Grama Yojane coming in the jurisdiction of this Division.

1. Date for downloading Tender Form from: 02.04.2026 to 10.04.2026 **2.** Last date to submit Tender Form: 10.04.2026, 17.00 Hrs. **3.** Date of opening bid: 13.04.2026, 17.00 Hrs.

1. GENERAL Category Works: 24266/CALL-2, 24960, 25175, 23220, 3681 **2. ST Category Work:** 24227/CALL-2

For details of "K.P.P.P." website tender contact the office of the Executive Engineer, Panchayat Raj Engineering Division, Sagara and can be viewed in "K.P.P.P." website (www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in) and can be downloaded. Further information can be obtained from the concerned case worker of this office on phone No. 08183-226064 during office hours or contact helpdesk phone No.: 080-25501216, 25501227.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, P.R.E. Division, Sagara

DIPR/smg/ksmca/26-27/27/04/26

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अल्पकालिन ई०–प्रोक्यूरमेन्ट सूचना

निविदा सूचना सं०– RCD /PAKUR/168/2026-27 दिनांक : 02-04-2026

1.	कार्य का नाम	पथ प्रमंडल, पाकुड अन्तर्गत रानीपुर चौक से गोपालपुर डांगापाड़ा भाया पुचाईबेड़ा पैनम रोड कुल लंबाई (0.00 से 21.80 कि0मी0) में राईडिंग क्वालिटी में सुधार (Improvement of Riding Quality) कार्य। (योजना मद) वित्तीय वर्ष 2026–27
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3.	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि	06 (छः) माह
4.	ई०–निविदा प्राप्त करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	27.04.2026 के पूर्वाह्न 12.00 बजे तक
5.	ई०–निविदा का बेबसाईट पर प्रकाशन की तिथि एवं समय	06.04.2026 के पूर्वाह्न 10.30 बजे से
6.	ई०–निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले कार्यालय का नाम एवं पता	कार्यपालक अभियंता, पथ निर्माण विभाग, पथ प्रमण्डल, पाकुड़।
7.	ई–प्रोक्यूरमेन्ट अधिकारी का सम्पर्क नं0	06435–220592
8.	ई–प्रोक्यूरमेन्ट सेल का सम्पर्क सहायता नम्बर	0651–2401010

विशेष जानकारी ***http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in*** पर देखी जा सकती है।

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Office of the District Officer
MINORITY WELFARE DEPARTMENT
Moulana Azad Minority Bhavan, Opposite to K.S.C.A Cricket Ground, Ramatheertha Nagar, Belagavi - 590016.
Phone No: 0831-2950349 E-mail: dombelagavi1@gmail.com

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಅಸಂಕಇಬಿ/ಚಿ.ವಿ/ಹೊ.ಸಿ/ಟೆಂಡರ್/ಇಆರ್–78/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 02–04–2026

E-TENDER NOTIFICATION (through e-Procurement)

For the year 2026-27, Tenders are invited through e-Procurement to select Agencies Separately for the Supply of Manpower to Residential Schools / Colleges and Post- Metric Boys / Girls Hostels running under the Belagavi District, **Bailhongal Sub Division** Minority Welfare Department for a period of one year or till further orders. Applicants can apply through **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in from 02-04-2026 to 04-05-2026.**

Sl. No.	Section	Tender Amount (Rs. in Lakhs)	EMD Amount (Rs. in Lakhs)	Date of Submission of Tender	Last Date for Submission of Tender
1	Bailhongal Sub Division	176.56	2.65	02-04-2026	04-05-2026 upto 5.30 PM

For more information Contact for Office Phone No: **0831-2950349**

Sd/-
District Officer,
Minority Welfare Department,
Belagavi.

DIPR/Belagavi/29/Adverto/2026-27

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ई–पुनर्निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या–**RDD/SD/KHUNTI/04/2024-25**
4th Call
PR. No.-351662 (Rural Development)22-23(D)

1.कार्य की विस्तृत विवरणी:

क्र० सं०	कार्य का नाम	प्राक्कलित राशि	अग्रधन की राशि	परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	खूँटी जिलान्तर्गत तोरपा प्रखण्ड के फटका–फड़िंगा जाने वाले पथ पर बनई नदी पर उच्चस्तरी पुल निर्माण।	5,17,08,100/–	10,34,500/–	10,000/–	24 माह

2. वेबसाइट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि –07.04.2026
3. ई–निविदा प्राप्ति की तिथि एवं समय–दिनांक 08.04.2026 से दिनांक 28.04.2026 को अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक
4. ई–निविदा खोलने का स्थान – कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमण्डल, खूँटी
5. ई–निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय –29.04.2026 अपराह्न 5:00 बजे
6. ई–निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता :– कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल, खूँटी
7. ई–निविदा प्रकोष्ठ का दूरभाष सं० – 8102171790
8. परिमाण विपत्र की राशि घट–बढ़ सकती है तद्नुसार अग्रधन की राशि देय होगी।
9. निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रधन की राशि केवल Online Mode द्वारा स्वीकार्य होगी।
10. निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रधन की राशि का ई–भुगतान जिस खाता से किया जायेगा, उसी खाते में अग्रधन की राशि वापस होगी। अगर खाता को बंद कर दिया जाता है तो उसकी सारी जवाबदेही आपकी होगी।

विस्तृत जानकारी के लिये वेबसाईट www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in एवं कार्यालय की सूचना पट्ट पर देखा जा सकता है।

कार्यपालक अभियंता
ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमंडल,खूँटी।

PR 376662 Rural Development(25-26)D

Karnataka State Forest Industries Corporation Limited KSFIC Wood is good
(A Govt. of Karnataka Undertaking)
ISO 14001-2015 Certified Company
RMP Unit, "Vanavikas' 3rd Floor, 18th Cross, Malleshwaram, Bangalore - 03
RM Direct : 080-23445646, e-mail:rmrmp.2008@rediffmail.com

No. KSFIC/RM-RMP/FW AND PW SALE/CR-01/2025-26 Dated: 02.04.2026

e-TENDER NOTIFICATION

e-Tender is invited from the intended Industries/ Companies/ Individuals for purchase of Eucalyptus /Acacia Pulpwood and Firewood prepared by the RMP unit, KSFIC, Bangaluru. The details are as under

1. Last date to receive the bid through KPP Portal is on **10.04.2026 up to 03:30 P.M. 2.** Interested persons have to pay EMD deposit at KPP Portal as per the detailed conditions laid in the notification dated:**02.04.2026**

The Notification and other details can be accessed from **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** KPP Portal helpline No.+91-8046010000 & +91-8068948777.

Further details can also be had from the above Office during Office hours.

Sd/-
Deputy Conservator of Forest and Regional Manager, RMP Unit, Bangalore.

DIPR/CP/JA/ 60/2026-27

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
ROAD CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT
ROAD DIVISION, KHUNTI

e-Procurement Notice

E_Tender Reference No. RCD/KHUNTI/136 Date :- 02/04/2026

1.	Name of the work	**Construction of H.L. Bridge over Banai River at 8th KM of Khunti – Torpa – Kolebira Road.**
2.	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	**Rs. 6,04,88,737.88 Rs. Six Crore Four Lakh Eighty Eight Thousand Seven Hundred thirty Seven and paise Eighty Eight Only.**
3.	Bid Security (Rs.)	**Rs. 6,05,000.00 Rs. Six Lakh Five Thousand Only.**
4.	Cost of Document (Rs.)	**Rs. 10,000.00 Rs. Ten Thousand Only.**
5.	Time of Completion	**24 Months**
6.	Last date / Time for receipt of bids	**04.05.2026 up to 12:00 Noon**
7.	Date of Publication of Tender on website	**09.04.2026 at 10:30 A.M.**
8.	Name & Address of office Inviting tender	Executive Engineer, Road Construction Department, Road Division, Khunti
9.	Contact no. of Procurement Officer	06528-221215
10.	Helpline number of e-Procurement Cell	0651-2401010

Note :- Estimated cost of tender can be increased or decreased
Further details can be seen on website http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in

Executive Engineer,
R.C.D., Road Division, Khunti

PR 376677 (Road) 26-27 (D)

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
BALLARI MEDICAL COLLEGE AND RESEARCH CENTRE, BALLARI.
Reg.No:205/1995-96-Recognized by Medical Council of India, New Delhi vide No:MCI-57(3)/79-Med/1912, Dtd.16-04-1979 &Endst. No.MCI-37(1)(Recog.-18)(UG)/2017-Med./109629,Dt: 06/05/2019
DIRECTOR: 8147796529 PRINCIPAL :8147796527
CAO:8147796526PA : 8147796539.
e-mail-ids:directorbmcrcballari@gmail.com, website : https://bmcrcballari.karnataka.gov.inprincipalbmcrcballari@gmail.com

No. BMCRC/SUP/TEND/TAB/14/2025-26/593
DATE:01.04.2026

e-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tenderis invited from theeligible Bidders for Supply of Tabletsto Medical College Hospital, BMCRC, Ballarion Rate Contract for a period of One yearunder Two bid system through e-procurement portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.inof Government of Karnataka as per the KTPP Act-1999-2000. The interested Bidders are informed to submit the proposal in priscribed format in above said e-portal on are before 16.04.2026 @5.00PM. The total approximate cost of tender is Rs.61.58Lakhs Further details may be obtained in the above said website and www.bmcrcballari.karnataka.gov.in.

Sd/- Dean & Director, BMCRC, Ballari

DIPR/Ballari/2026-27/KSMCA/RO No/18

Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Kolar Division, Kolar-563101
e-mail: eepwdkolar07@gmail.com
website: www.kpwd.gov.in
e-portal: http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in
Phone No. 08152-222022

e-tender Notification – K.W. 4 Short Term Tender notification No: 01/2026-27 Dt. 02.04.2026.

Tender is invited through e-Procurement for works in the limits of KGF Taluk, Kolar District Public Works Department from the PWD Registered Contractors under **H/A: 844-Deposit Contribution Estimate cost : 330.00** Lakhs EMD Amount: mentioned in KPP Portal, Period for completion of work: 11 months. Contractors may download the tender documents KW- 4 from Karnataka State Procurement portal **(viz., htpp://kppp.karnataka.gov.in).** Filled in tenders shall be **uploaded on or before 16.00 hours. on 18.04.2026** through Karnataka State Procurement portal. Tenders received **will be opened after 11.30 hours on 21.04.2026** in KPP portal. Further details regarding the works and also for details about this tender notification please contact KPP portal and also you may contact this office during working hours. **Note: Any changes in this Notification will be published in KPP portal only.**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Kolar

DIPR/KOLAR/RO:10/KSMCA/2026-27

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
KARNATAKA FOREST DEPARTMENT
Assistant Conservator of Forests,
Nagamangala Territorial Sub Division, Mandya Division
No: Acf/NMG/Outource/Tender/CR-1/2026-27
Date: 01-04-2026

Tender Notification

TENDER No. : Acf/NMG/Outsource/Tender/CR-1/2026-27. PROCUREMENT ENTITY : Karnataka Forest Department. TENDER INVITING AUTHORITY : Assistant Conservator of Forest, Nagamangala Territorial Sub Division, Mandya Division. PUBLISHED DATE : 01.04.2026. MAIL ID/ADDRESS TO REQUEST CLARIFICATIONS : acfnagamangala@gmail.com. CONTACT PERSON : Assistant Conservator of Forest, Nagamangala Territorial Sub Division, Mandya Division.

First Time Tender

LAST DATE & TIME FOR TENDER QUERIES/ CLARFICATIONS : 13-04-2026, 5.30 PM. LAST DATE & TIME FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS : 15.04.2026-5.00 PM. ONLINE IN KARNATAKA PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PORTAL : https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. DATE & TIME FOR OPENING OF TECHNICAL TENDER ONLINE IN KARNATAKA PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PORTAL : 16.04.2026, 5.10 PM. DATE & TIME FOR OPENING OF FINANCIAL TENDERS : 21.04.2026-5.20 PM.

Second Time Tender (If no successfull bids are received on first time)

LAST DATE & TIME FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS : 20.04.2026-5.30 PM. DATE AND TIME FOR OPENING OF TECHNICAL TENDER ONLINE IN KARNATAKA PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PORTAL : 27.04.2026, 5.00 PM. DATE & TIME FOR OPENING OF FINANCIAL TENDERS : 28.04.2026, 5.00 PM. ADDRESS FOR COMMUNICATION : Assistant Conservator of Forest, Nagamangala Territorial Sub Division, TB Extension, Nagamangala. AMOUNT PUT TO TENDER (Including Service charge, GST) : Rs.54,85,804.00/-. AMOUNT OF EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT : Show in Table 1.1.

ಮೇಲಿನ ದಿನಾಂಕಗಳಂದು ಸಾರ್ವತ್ರಿಕ ರಜೆಯಿದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ/ಸಾರ್ವತ್ರಿಕ ರಜೆಯೆಂದು ಘೋಷಣೆಯಾದಲ್ಲಿ ಮುಂದಿನ ದಿನಾಂಕಗಳನ್ನು ಪರಿಗಣಿಸುವುದು.

PERIOD OF CONTRACT : 01.04.2026 to 31.03.2027 = 12 Months.

VALIDITY OF TENDER : 45 days from the last date for Submission of Tenders.

Sd/-Assitant Conservator of Forests, Nagamangala Sub Division, Mandya Division

ವಾಸಾಸಂಂ/ಸನಿ–ಮಂ/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/008/2026–27

3RD LANGUAGE ROW 'Could've been backup like in CBSE' vs 'Good step for 2-language policy'

Lame duck of a language for a leaner curriculum?

RASHMI BELUR
BENGALURU, DHNS

The recent and sudden announcement by the state government to do away with the marks system for third language subjects in SSLC board exams and shifting to grading system has received mixed reactions.

Though the private schools affiliated to the state board have raised objections to the decision expressing concerns from the students' point of view, academicians, Kannada Development Authority and pro-Kannada activists have welcomed it.

They say that this decision is the first step towards the introduction of two-language policy in the state.

The reason for private schools to oppose this decision is mainly because of the policies followed by other boards, especially Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE), the main competitor for state board schools.

"The number of schools affiliated to the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) board is very few in the state, but CBSE schools are our main competitors. This sudden decision by the government threatens the state board schools as there are high chances of migrant population from other states, specially Hindi-speaking ones, shifting to CBSE schools," said the representative of a private unaided school from Bengaluru.

The Associated Management of Primary and Secondary Schools in Karnataka has submitted a petition to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, demanding that the government drop the decision.

D Shashi Kumar, general secretary of the Association, said, "Kannada is mandatory first or second language in the state, even at other board schools and there is no threat to the language of the land. Schools are teaching English also as a first or second language as it is the global language. Along with this, a third language is a must to foster well-rounded development of the child. Instead of shifting to a grading system, the government should have reduced the overall marks for third language, keeping it as a back-up subject, like in CBSE".

He said, before taking the decision, the government did not discuss with any of the stakeholders.

"We feel the decision was taken to fulfil the demands of a particular group of people and such decisions will turn suicidal for the state education system," he added.

However, developmental educationist V P Niranjanaradhya said this decision was the first step to implement a two-language policy.

"The government has made a very good decision. But detailed guidelines need to be issued to give clarity. An official order should be issued soon," he said.

"When the government gives textbooks, continues the same teaching, how can schools claim that students will lose interest in any language?," Niranjanaradhya said.

The educationist said that the state education policy (SEP) commission had also recommended the implementation of a two-language policy for students.

Figures for 2025-26

Third language	No. of students
Hindi	7,52,000
Kannada	11,400
English	32,000
Urdu	5,544
Sanskrit	5,159
Tulu	845
Konkani	34
Marathi	03

Fail percentage up

The number of students failing in third language, including Hindi, in SSLC examination is increasing every year.

In the 2024-25 SSLC exam, a total of 1.64 lakh students failed in third language (1.48 lakh in Hindi).

With grades and not marks being awarded for third language in the SSLC examination from the current academic year itself, stakeholders say the decision could have been taken after discussing with all concerned.

From this year itself

As announced by School Education and Literacy Minister Madhu Bangarappa recently, the grading system for third language will be applicable from the current year itself. With this, students will get grades instead of marks in third language. The SSLC pass percentage from now on will be calculated for 525 marks instead of 625, though students will write exams for 625.

When asked whether it is an indication of a two-language policy, the minister said, "I will not talk about it now. It has to be discussed on a larger platform".

What CBSE follows

In CBSE, third language helps students enhance overall results in class 10. Though a third language is not mandatory, it is a supplement after class 8 and if students opt for a third language, it will act like a backup if they score less in any subject in board exams.

In class 10, if a student fails in first or second language, marks of third language will be considered.

Even if they have passed first and second language, and the highest score is in third language, the board considers the third language score.

Disadvantages of grading

As explained by many teachers, the percentage of students in board exams is very important to get admissions for PUC.

"We have seen many students losing PUC seats because they fall short by a few percentage points," a college principal said.

Some said not awarding marks for third language, specially Hindi (as a majority of the state board schools offer Hindi as third language) will deprive their competitiveness.

"Most competitive exams, recruitment exams are in English and Hindi. As English is not that easy for Kannada-medium state board children, they can try their luck in Hindi. Also, there are exams which are only in Hindi, especially in banking and defence sectors. There, our youths will lose opportunities," said the head of a leading competitive exams training centre.

PU lecturers seek exemption from census work, cite exams, valuation

Also have to coach II PU students for entrance exams, they say

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka Pre-university College Lecturers' Association has petitioned the government, requesting it to exempt them from census work.

In a representation to the additional chief secretary to the department of school education and literacy, they have mentioned about the various training works, evaluation and examination work scheduled for them.

Thousands of lecturers have been deputed for the census work as enumerators and the training has been completed in batches.

Training of master trainers was done in March. Enumerators' training is being undertaken in three phases.

The first phase was completed in all districts from April 1 to 3 and the second phase will be held from April 4 to 6. The third phase of training for enumerators has been organised from April 7 to 9. The household census will be conducted from April 15 to May 15.

The school education department (PU) is conducting online live classes every day for 25,000 selected students (II PU science stream) of government PU colleges from the academic year 2025-26, to train them for CET/NEET/JEE entrance exams.

However, due to preparatory examinations, practical exams and annual exams, online live classes were temporarily suspended. Now, the suspended online classes have been rescheduled from April 1 to 20.

According to the department order, physics, chemistry, mathematics and biology classes (4 hours daily) will be conducted and all lecturers are required to participate compulsorily.

The II PU results are likely to be declared on April 7, after which the recount of marks and revaluation will begin. All science stream faculties have been assigned to the CET/NEET/JEE online classes till April 20. The theory examination of National Institute of Open Schooling will be held from April 10 to May 6. Then, the Karnataka Examination Authority will conduct 'CET-2026' on April 23 and 24, the association said.

The II PU examination-2 will be held from April 25 to May 8 as per schedule.

The National Testing Agency will conduct NEET-2026 on May 3. Only PU college lecturers will be deputed for all these tasks, it said in the representation. "Due to all this, PU lecturers have heavy workload and the government should exempt them from census work," said Ningegowda A H, president of the association.

ANF joins search for missing trekker

MADIKERI, DHNS: The Anti Naxal Force on Saturday joined the operation to trace Sharanya, a 35-year-old woman from Kozhikode, Kerala, who went missing in the forest while trekking to the Tadiandamol Betta in Madikeri taluk. A team of personnel from forest department, police and locals are also part of the search. The dog squad could not find any clue, said police.

Edu expo broadens options, mock-ups give a headstart

'First-hand info better than searching colleges, courses online'

BENGALURU, DHNS

The 16th edition of Eduverse, the mega career expo by *DH* and Prajavani, witnessed hordes of aspirants at Palace Grounds on Saturday.

Many parents and students navigated over 50 institutional stalls with a mix of anxiety and excitement.

"I came here thinking only about CS (computer science), but after the AI session and KEA's briefing, I'm looking at data science and even agritech," said Rahul, a II PU student.

Parents, too, found relief in direct interaction with experts. "The mock NEET exams and one-on-one counselling gave us a clear roadmap," said Sunitha, a parent from Malleswaram.

A parent visited to learn more about future courses for his son who has completed PU and is considering an LLB course in Bengaluru.

Venkatesh, another parent, is interested in engineering and is considering food technology course for his ward. Another parent visited to explore course options for his son, interested in gaming and animation courses.

Sumitra, a parent from Vijayanagar, said: "It's difficult to travel to far-off places like Yelahanka or Hosur just to check out different colleges. Having info on colleges from various locations available in one single place is incredibly convenient for parents. I now have a much clearer idea about which course and which college I should choose for my daughter, thanks to the fair."

Ashoka from Kadabagere, said: "The experience of participating directly in a fair like this and gathering information first-hand is far better than searching for colleges or courses on internet. Eduverse has made it much easier to make the right decisions. It is especially helpful for those keen on pursuing their studies within Karnataka."

Chandana, another parent, said: "My daughter took the science stream in PUC and has just completed her exams. We came to this fair to figure out the next steps for her future. We received excellent guidance here."

Students get their questions answered at a stall at Eduverse, the premier education expo organised by Deccan Herald and Prajavani, in Bengaluru on Saturday. DH PHOTOS/PRASHANTH H G

DH ಪ್ರಜಾವಾಣಿ Eduverse A Premier Education Expo

Students and parents visit a stall at the exhibition.

Trend shifting, students now explore multitude of career options: KEA chief

BENGALURU, DHNS

The 16th edition of 'Eduverse,' the premier education and career guidance expo organised by Deccan Herald and Prajavani, kicked off at the Palace Grounds here on Saturday.

The event aims to provide a comprehensive platform for students and parents to navigate the increasingly complex landscape of higher education and career choices.

The expo was inaugurated by H Prasanna, executive director of Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA), who noted the shifting trends in student preferences.

"Earlier, students used to come only for CET and NEET. Now, they are coming for various courses like veterinary, agriculture and pharmacy. The trend is changing," Prasanna observed.

Addressing the anxiety often associated with the admission process, the official provided the much-needed clarity for hundreds of aspirants in attendance.

"Everything is transparent now. Students need not worry about the seat allotment process as it is purely merit-based," he assured.

Prasanna highlighted the evolving nature of the professional landscape, stating, "Education is not just about engineering or medicine any more. There are immense opportunities in research and specialised sectors that students are now beginning to explore".

Popular content creator and entrepreneur 'Dr Bro' (Gagan Srinivas), shared his personal journey of following his passion.

Highlighting the importance of education, he urged students to pursue degrees while also listening to their hearts. He appealed to parents to be facilitators rather than decision-makers, allowing children to choose their own paths.

Popular content creator and entrepreneur 'Dr Bro' (Gagan Srinivas), Chief Executive Officer of The Printers (Mysore) Private Limited (TPML) Kiran Sundararajan, Executive Director of Karnataka Examinations Authority H Prasanna and TPML Joint Managing Director K N Tilak Kumar at the inauguration of the 16th edition of 'Eduverse,' the premier education and career guidance expo organised by Deccan Herald and Prajavani, in Bengaluru on Saturday.

Dr J B Simha, professor and mentor at REVA University, speaks on AI at the expo.

Ravi A S, retired PRO and principal, guides students on CET, NEET and COMED-K counselling.

16th edition of Eduverse kicks off with sessions on career paths, AI & more

At the expo, while medical and engineering streams remained popular, the spotlight shifted toward the future of technology during a session on artificial intelligence (AI).

Addressing the audience at the expo, J B Simha, professor and mentor, REVA University, demystified the rapidly evolving tech landscape.

He emphasised that AI was no longer a niche elective, but a foundational skill across industries.

"AI is not just about coding, it is about problem-solving and augmenting human intelligence," Prof Simha noted, urging students to build multidisciplinary expertise to remain competitive in an automated world.

This year's expo features over 50 leading academic institutions, offering one-on-one counselling sessions with professors and industry experts.

Ravi A S, retired PRO and principal, took students through the process of CET, NEET and COMED-K counselling.

A significant highlight for competitive exam aspirants is the provision of mock CET and NEET, allowing students to gauge their preparedness in a real-time environment.

The expo remains open from 9 am to 6 pm on Sunday. Entry is free for all students and parents. Following the Bengaluru leg, Eduverse is scheduled to move to Hubballi on April 11 and 12.

Police intensify investigation into 'Love Jihad' case

HUBBALLI, DHNS: The police have intensified the investigation into the case of alleged sexual assault and blackmail by Sameer Mulla, a gym trainer.

The Vidyanagar police, acting on a case filed by a college student, confiscated the mobile phone and other items from the suspect.

They recorded the statements of the suspect and the victim on Saturday. The latter also underwent a medical examination.

The police have taken Mulla and others involved into their custody and are questioning them.

Hindu activists and relatives of the girl have alleged that the suspect had attempted 'love jihad' on the girl and sexually assaulted her.

The gym trainer, who has been admitted to the KMCRI hospital after he was allegedly thrashed by the family of the victim, is undergoing treatment.

Hubballi-Dharwad police commissioner N Shashi Kumar visited the hospital and questioned Mulla for over 30 minutes.

The commissioner told reporters that a total of four cases had been registered.

"If more victims come forward to give complaints against Mulla, we will register and investigate them," Kumar said.

"As per the victim's complaint, the sister and brother-in-law of the suspect pressured her to cooperate with Mulla. We will question them also," he said.

HC upholds life term to farmer who killed wife with 19 chopper blows

Declines to consider case under exceptions in IPC Sec 300

AMBARISH B
BENGALURU, DHNS

The High Court of Karnataka has confirmed the life sentence imposed upon a farmer from Dharwad district for killing his wife with a chopper.

A division bench of Justices H P Sandesh and B Muralidhar Pai declined to consider the case under exceptions in IPC section 300 (culpable homicide).

Vishwanath Mallappa Chigari had challenged his conviction and life sentence for offences under IPC sections 302 and 307.

He had married Lakshmi and had three children. But seven years after marriage, Lakshmi moved to her mother's house in Kalakeri because Vishwanath allegedly ill-treated her.

On May 15, 2019, Vishwanath visited Kalakeri and sought permission to take his wife and children to his village Shalavadi in Navalgund to attend the Gurushanteshwar festival. Lakshmi's mother, Devakka, also accompanied them to Shalavadi.

At night, while everyone was sleeping, Lakshmi came running out of the house as Vishwanath followed her with a chopper in his hand.

He accused her of having an illicit relationship and assaulted her with the chopper. He also attacked Devakka when she attempted to rescue her daughter. Devakka suffered injuries to her neck and hand while Lakshmi succumbed to grievous injuries.

On Oct 27, 2022, the trial court convicted Vishwanath and sentenced him to life imprisonment. Challenging this verdict, Vishwanath argued that the trial court convicted him based on the testimony of interested witnesses. He further submitted that it was an act under grave provocation and that he did not intend to kill his wife.

After perusing the material, the division bench noted that a total of 19 injuries were inflicted upon the victim—all chop wound injuries—and that it was not a single blow without the intention to take her life.

"If it is a case of sudden provocation, he would have inflicted a single injury and if it is a case of single blow, then arguments of the counsel for the appellant would have been accepted. But here is a case of a series of injuries inflicted with the deadly weapon ie, 19 injuries, and almost all are the chop wound injuries and that the other injuries are sustained when the victim herself tried to escape from the blow of the accused and these injuries also on the vital part - neck and head," the bench stated.

The court further said: "The circumstances under which the incident took place and also to take note of the fact that both the victim and also the accused were not on cordial terms and the victim having not tolerated the harassment went and stayed back in the house of complainant (Devakka) and on the particular day, that too when complainant did not agree to send her along with the accused, but only heeding to the advice of the well-wishers, she sent her along with children," the bench said adding that it is not a case to bring the case within purview of exceptions under IPC Section 300.

Free IPL tickets: Legislators' PAs queue up outside Speaker's office

BENGALURU, DHNS:

Despite the public outcry against "VIP culture," Karnataka legislators sent their personal assistants to collect free tickets for Sunday's IPL match (RCB vs CSK).

On Saturday, a long queue was seen outside the Assembly Speaker's chamber at Vidhana Soudha, with legislators' PAs waiting their turn to collect the passes.

During the recently concluded Budget session of the Karnataka legislature, legislators cutting across party lines had complained that elected representatives were being given only a single free ticket in the common gallery for IPL matches at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru. They demanded at least four tickets in the VIP enclosure.

Assembly Speaker U T Khader had intervened and asked the government to hold discussions with KSCA to provide four free tickets to each legislator, triggering massive public outrage. Despite netizens calling out the "VIP culture," Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy D K Shivakumar justified the MLAs' demand and held talks with KSCA, which has now agreed to provide three free tickets for IPL matches and two for international fixtures.

When you eat matters: Study throws light on health benefits of punctual diet

Meal time, from Jacket Page 2

"The fact that time-restricted feeding performs on par with a weight-loss drug underscores its translational potential," said Godbole, a Padma award recipient and former professor at AIIMS Delhi and Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences, Lucknow.

Naibedya Chattopadhyay, a senior team member from CDRI, said, "These findings are especially relevant for postmenopausal women, a population that faces increased risks of obesity, insulin resistance, osteoporosis, and sarcopenia due to oestrogen deficiency." "While diet does matter, diet timing is equally important. But if one has to undergo a lifestyle change, it should be done in a graded manner," Godbole said.

The study has appeared online in the Journal of Nutrition.

Internal quota: Home minister opposes 6:6:5 formula

DAVANGERE, DHNS: Criticising the internal reservation formula 6:6:5 finalised by the government, Home Minister G Parameshwara has said that "the strength of scheduled castes was 24.1% earlier. But it was cut down to 6:6:5 formula through political conspiracies. BJP has cut down reservation percentage of SCs over the years".

He was speaking at a meeting of the district Chalavadi Mahasabha held in the city on Friday as part of poll campaign.

"It is unfortunate and this should not have happened as the strength of scheduled castes has been cut down drastically." He charged that BJP had meted out injustice to SCs.

Speaking to mediapersons after the meeting, he said the government would take up internal reservation for SCs after the bypolls.

HSRP must for all vehicles registered before Apr 1, 2019: Transport dept

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Transport Department on Saturday scotched media reports that High Security Registration Plates (HSRPs) were not mandatory for older vehicles.

In a statement, Additional Commissioner of Transport (Enforcement, South) M P Omkareshwari said the Centre had mandated HSRP affixation for vehicles registered before April 1, 2019, via a notification on Dec 4, 2018. Accordingly, Karnataka mandated HSRP for all such vehicles.

While the department has not enforced the mandate due to ongoing litigation in the High Court, no stay orders have been passed on the Centre's notification. The court is hearing a writ appeal filed in 2023 and has restrained state from taking any further precipitate steps/action/decision.

The writ appeal challenged the mandate that vehicles affix HSRPs only through OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers) and their authorised dealers. The appellants argue that all licensed number plate manufacturers having Type Approval Certificates be permitted to affix the plates.

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer,
Shivaji Nagara Division, Thimmaiah Road,
Queens Road, Bengaluru

No.: EE/SJN/E-PROC/01/2026-27 Date: 04.04.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Two Cover System (Through e-Procurement Only)

The Executive Engineer (Shivajinagar Division), BCCC, Bengaluru invites competitive bids from reputed Firms / Companies / Agencies for the work of ``Annual Maintenance of Arterial and Sub-Arterial Roads including footpath in Shivajinagar Division.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1	Annual Maintenance of Arterial and Sub-Arterial Roads including footpath in Shivajinagar Division. **Approximate Length in Km: 59.91 Kms. Amount put to tender (Rs. in Lakhs): 75.48, EMD (in Rupees.): 1,74,100.00**

Calendar of events: (1) The bid document can be downloaded from the GOK KPPP **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)** website. **(2)** Date of pre-bid meeting: **13.04.2026** at **12:30 p.m. (3)** Last date for submission of bid document: **15.04.2026** at **4:00 p.m. (4)** Opening of Technical Proposal: **16.04.2026** at **4:30 p.m. (5)** Opening of Financial Proposal: **Will be intimated to the bidders.** Further details can be obtained from the above office during working hours or from the website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Shivajinagara Division, BCCC

Karnataka Public works Department.
Tumkur Division, Karnataka Telephone: 0816-2272479,
No;EE/KPWD/Tmk/JE.1/T.No.02/2026-27 Dt: 02.04.2026

Invitation For Tenders (IFT) KW-4
E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

On behalf of Government of Karnataka tenders are invited in Two cover system for Class-2 & above Contractors registered in PWD for 04 works under 5054-80-190-0-01-132 KRDCL Head of account in the jurisidiction of Tumkur Division through KPPP-Portal(https://kppp.karnataka. gov.in). The dates are published as below.

(Maximun amount Put to Tender Rs.249.00 Lakhs and Minimum amount put to Tender Rs.154.56 Maximun EMD Amount Rs. 374852/- and Minimum EMD Amount Rs.231840/-)

1. Last date for tender information enqueries : 15-04-2026 :17.30. 2. Last date for submission of tender: 16-04-2026 : 16.00 3. Date of opening the Technical bid: 17-04-2026 : 16.30. 4. Date of opening the Financial bid: 18-04-2026 : 17.00. Note: Turnover Certificate without UDI Number will not be considered. Here after Changes with Refference to This Notification will be Notified in E-Portal Only

Sd/- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
DIPR/TUM/09/KSMCA/2026-27 PWD DIVISION, TUMKUR.

Karnataka Soaps & Detergents Limited
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
Regd. Office: #27, Industrial Suburb, Bengaluru - Pune Highway, Rajajinagar, Bengaluru - 560055.
E-mail: ksdl.dgmmtls@gmail.com, Ph. No.: 080-22164879/22164886/22164901
An ISO-9001:2015 & 14001:2015 Company
Date : 04.04.2026

e-Auction Notification

KS&DL invites applications through e-Portal for below e-Auction. Documents for e-Auction can be downloaded from e-Portal through website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sl.No.	e-Auction Number	e-Auction Title	Date of e-Auction published	Last date to confirm interest for Participation in e- Auction	Date and Time of Live e-Auction
1	KSDL/2025-26/AUCTION23	Disposal of 200 Ltrs M.S. Drums at KSDL, Bengaluru Complex on AS IS WHERE IS BASIS	03.04.2026	15.04.2026	Commences at 10.30 am & concludes at 4:30 pm on 18.04.2026

Sd/- Asst. General Manager (Materials)

Karnataka Soaps & Detergents Limited
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
Sandal City: P.B. No. 5531, Bengaluru-Pune Highway, Bengaluru - 560 055.
Ph: 080-22164879, 22164886, Website: www.mysoresandal.org e-mail: **ksdl.dgmmtls@gmail.com**
An ISO-9001:2015 & 14001:2015 Company
Date: 04.04.2026

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tenders are invited by **KS&DL** in two cover system through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal (Website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/**) with respect to supply of following Goods/Services/Works.

Sl. No.	Tender Number	Tender Name	Tender Quantity	Published date	Last Date of Submission
1	KSDL/2026-27/IND1199	Procurement of sandal face pack base	8000 Kgs	03-04-2026	21-04-2026
2	KSDL/2026-27/IND1200	Procurement of Vitamine E Acetate	900 Kgs	03-04-2026	21-04-2026
3	KSDL/2026-27/IND1201	Procurement of Turbopol 1270	23 MT	03-04-2026	21-04-2026
4	KSDL/2026-27/IND1202	Procurement of AOS LIQUID	20 MT	03-04-2026	21-04-2026
5	KSDL/2026-27/IND1203	Procurement of Aleo Vera Juice	3500 Kgs	03-04-2026	21-04-2026
6	KSDL/2026-27/IND1204	Procurement of Totalase T Enzyme or Equivalent enzyme	250 Kg	03-04-2026	21-04-2026
7	KSDL/2026-27/IND1205	Procurement of Tri Sodium Citrate Dihydrate (Food Grade)	5000 Kgs	03-04-2026	21-04-2026
8	KSDL/2026-27/IND1206	Procurement of Polyox WSR N60K / PEG-45M	100 Kg	03-04-2026	21-04-2026
9	KSDL/2026-27/IND1207	Procurement of Questoll Liquid 501	25 MT	03-04-2026	21-04-2026
10	KSDL/2026-27/IND1208	Procurement of Sodium Percarbonate	3 MT	03-04-2026	21-04-2026
11	KSDL/2026-27/IND1209	Procurement of Arrow Kleen P (L)	500 Kgs	03-04-2026	21-04-2026
12	KSDL/2026-27/IND1210	Procurement of Arrow Kleen ALC (L)	400 Kgs	03-04-2026	21-04-2026
13	KSDL/2025-26/SE0229	Secondary Freight for the transportation of KSDL Products from KSDL DPG/C&FA godowns to requisite destinations (Institution sales and RDS) in Karnataka and Goa	Services	03-04-2026	04-05-2026

For any further queries/clarifications please contact the undersigned.

Sd/- Asst. General Manager (Materials)

STROLL STOPOVER

A rare treat awaited tourists at the Bandipur tiger reserve safari recently. A tigress is quenching her thirst at a roadside puddle near Moorkere in Gundlupet taluk of Chamarajanagar district as her two cubs watch. They were captured on cameras and phones by the excited holidayers and the photos have gone viral on social media. The increasing visibility of tigers has led to a big spike in footfall in Bandipur. With the region receiving two spells of rain over the last 15 days, the parched landscape of the forest has turned into a lush green carpet.

Centre should view states as coordinates, not subordinates: Justice Nagarathna

Nagarathna, from Jacket Page 2

There must be an approach of accommodation and understanding between the states so as to arrive at a consensus in the first instance, rather than filing suits for various reliefs before the Supreme Court, she said.

"Mentoring of states by the Central government, mediation of disputes such as border disputes or water disputes between states would result in positive outcomes rather than indulging in litigation as adversaries," the judge said.

Highlighting the need for dialogue, negotiation, and mediation, Justice Nagarathna said, when states begin filing suits against one another, or against the Centre, it reflects not strength, but a weakening of cooperative federalism. Issues such as border disputes or water-sharing disputes are too complex, sensitive, and enduring to be reduced to adversarial litigation before the courts alone, she felt.

She said preservation of the Constitution cannot be understood solely as the task of defending rights at moments of crisis.

It lies equally in the everyday, routine functioning of institutions viz whether the Election Commission conducts elections with independence that inspires trust, whether the Finance Commission preserves fiscal balance without yielding to unitary pressures; whether regulatory bodies such as the Competition Commission of India and SEBI act with neutrality rather than on executive preference; whether the legislature deliberates on forthcoming laws rather than merely stamps approval; whether the executive governs within law rather than over it and whether the courts remain anchored, at all times, in the discipline of the Constitution which includes independence, she said.

States that controlled population won't lose LS seats: PM

Modi, from Jacket Page 2

"The BJP-NDA has formed governments in many Northeastern states as well as Goa that have a considerable Christian population.

The BJP-NDA governments in those states are going ahead with the development initiatives," said the PM.

Modi's statement assumed significance as churches had come out in the open against the Union government over the FCRA amendment Bill, as it could affect many institutions run by churches with foreign contribution.

Accusing both the CPM and the Congress over the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple gold heist case, Modi said that once the BJP comes to power in Kerala, a detailed investigation will be initiated.

He alleged that while Congress and CPM leaders were linked to the case, the Congress was trying to project itself as pro-Hindu.

Modi expressed confidence that the BJP would form a government in Kerala this time.

Separately, he conducted a roadshow in Thiruvananthapuram as part of campaign for BJP-NDA candidates, including BJP state president Rajeev Chandrasekhar.

Kannada-medium teachers in Maharashtra face bleak future over 'language' test

Kannada medium, from Jacket Page 2

"I have been working as a Kannada teacher for the last 22 years. Teachers serving in schools as well as fresh candidates are finding it difficult to read Marathi question papers. Due to this, many of them have failed in exams," said Dinesh Chavan, a teacher at Babalad Zilla Parishad Primary Kannada Medium School in Akkalkot taluka of Solapur district.

With the careers of thousands of teachers at stake, there is a growing demand for the Karnataka government to intervene in the matter.

"If qualified teachers do not become available, there is a fear that Kannada medium schools in Maharashtra will close down in the near future. This will be a major blow to the Kannada culture and education in the border regions. If the government does not take a decision in time, a massive protest will be launched," Kannada Sahitya Parishat Maharashtra unit president Somashekhar Jamshetti said.

The Kannada Development Authority of the Karnataka government had written to Maharashtra education minister and education secretary, requesting the protection of interests of the Kannada language minority.

Moreover, in 2023, a delegation led by the MLA of Jath, Vikramsimha Sawant, met with the education secretary, who had assured that question papers would be provided in Kannada.

Meanwhile, Kannada Development Authority Chairman Dr Purushottama Bilimale said the President of India is vested with powers to invoke Article 350B of the Constitution, which mandates appointing a language director to investigate all matters regarding safeguarding linguistic minorities. The official should report directly to the President to ensure the protection of educational and cultural interests of such communities, he added.

"Kannada language is facing problems in border areas due to the politics being played by leaders in both states. I have already written twice to the President, in 2025 and 2026, urging her to appoint a language officer, and have also brought it to the notice of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah seeking his intervention. Still, the problem is not yet resolved," Dr Bilimale lamented.

FORCED OR FAIR? CAPF reforms spark debate over leadership and cadre rights

New legislation attempts reform without rupture

YASHOVARDHAN AZAD

The debate on reforms in India's Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) — triggered in part by litigation and Supreme Court observations — has unfortunately been framed as a potentially dangerous CAPF cadre-versus-IPS leadership contest. The issue is not about service rivalry but the security-leadership architecture.

The apex court, in reality, did three things — and one thing it consciously did not. First, it acknowledged CAPF careers' structural inequities — slow promotions, stagnation, and limited avenues. Second, it granted Non-Functional Financial Upgradation (NFFU), bringing CAPF officers financially on a par with other Group-A services. Third, it recognised CAPFs as organised Group-A services. Importantly, the court did not direct the removal of IPS officers from leadership roles, nor did it recommend dismantling the deputation system.

CAPFs are rarely deployed in isolation: They operate alongside the state police. IPS officers trained within state systems ensure seamless coordination. Removing that link risks parallel chains of command in the same theatre.

As for the CAPF Bill, several of its elements — career progression and cadre review, financial parity, specialisation within CAPFs, improved service conditions, and technology integration — deserve unequivocal support.

Need for IPS leadership

The central question is: Who should lead? The answer lies in India's internal security system's nature.

The Indian Police Service is the operational expression of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's vision of a unified administrative and security framework. Meanwhile, CAPFs are rarely deployed in isolation: They operate alongside the state police. IPS officers trained within state systems ensure seamless coordination. Removing that link risks parallel chains of command in the same theatre.

Unlike the Army, the CAPFs depend on local intelligence, state police cooperation, and civil-administration support. IPS officers bring ground-level policing experience, familiarity with institutional networks, and proven expertise in crisis-handling in civilian contexts. A purely internal CAPF leadership model risks creating operational silos detached from local realities.

CAPFs have shown extraordinary courage; COBRA units in left-wing extremist areas are a prime example. But senior leadership is not about individual bravery. It is about multi-agency coordination, policy alignment, and strategic foresight. IPS officers are trained precisely for this.

The success against Maoism illustrates this synergy. The CAPFs played a critical role, but so did state units like Greyhounds, Jaguars, and DRGs — all raised and led by the IPS.

Institutionally, IPS officers bring intellectual heft; exposure to law, governance, and public policy; and leadership experience across districts, states, and Central assignments. CAPF officers, while highly capable within force structures, often lack this exposure.

Responding to rapidly-evolving internal-security challenges requires the integration of policing, intelligence, technology, and governance. IPS officers — by virtue of broader administrative exposure — are better positioned to lead this.

Reframing the debate

Reforming CAPF careers must ensure dignity and parity, while building specialisation and technology. However, dismantling the leadership structure that ensures national coherence would be a strategic error. Internal security requires coherence at the top.

The Supreme Court rightly addressed inequities; the Central government must now complete that reform agenda. In doing so, it must remember a fundamental principle: Strengthen the limbs, but do not sever the spine. The IPS leadership provides that spine. In an era of complex, hybrid threats, India does not need competing silos of command. It needs unity.

(The writer is a former IPS officer)

A setback to officers' struggle for recognition

SANJIV KRISHAN SOOD

The All Fool's Day will now be remembered by CAPF cadres for another reason: the passage of CAPF (General Administrative) Bill in the Rajya Sabha.

The CAPF-cadre officers' angst towards the Bill emanates from the fact that it overturns the Supreme Court's well-considered directions to the Central government to implement its own instructions relating to the grant of Organised Group-A Service (OGAS) status to officers of these cadres.

CAPF-cadre officers' angst towards the Bill emanates from the fact that it overturns the Supreme Court's well-considered directions to the Central government to implement its own instructions relating to the grant of OGAS status to officers of these cadres

The Bill is not only a travesty of justice and demoralising for CAPF cadres, who play a very important role in the country's security matrix, but also a serious blow to an institutional transformation and strengthening of national security that the SC order's implementation would have brought.

It overturns a well-deserved recognition that the officers of five Central armed forces got from the Supreme Court after a 14-year fight that led to a hard-earned legal victory.

The Bill does not address any of the festering administrative issues of the CAPFs. Instead of addressing the concerns of cadre officers, it simply aims to cement the reservation of higher supervisory and policy-level posts for IPS officers through an act of Parliament even though these were already reserved for them.

The cadre officers were compelled to approach the court only after the Central government rejected their repeated pleas for the grant of OGAS, even though CAPFs have been recognised as OGASes since 1986. It is important to note that all other 57 government services have all the OGAS benefits.

Among other things, the OGAS status implies that CAPF cadres were given Non-Functional Financial Upgradation (NFFU) — introduced in 2009 to grant financial upgradation to services facing acute stagnation.

That the CAPF cadres face acute stagnation is apparent from the fact that an officer joining at the entry level 15 years ago is still at his initial rank in some forces, with the position only marginally better in others.

SC order's significance

The SC order's implementation would have given limited succour to the officers in the matter of promotion. However, the most important benefit would have been the grant of NFFU.

The SC order's implementation would also have ensured that the officers who grew with the organisations from the grassroots and were familiar with the operational philosophy and ethos of these forces — besides having deep insight into various operational, logistic, and human-resource management issues — rose to higher leadership roles.

This would have gone a long way in enhancing operational efficiency and national security. It is incomprehensible why IPS officers, whose experiences were limited to policing and investigations, were considered better suited to lead these specialised forces.

The passage of the new Bill does not give finality to the festering issue. Once it becomes an Act, it is certain to be challenged in court. In several settled cases, the Supreme Court has unequivocally stated that the Legislature cannot override judgments, but may cure defects through valid amendments.

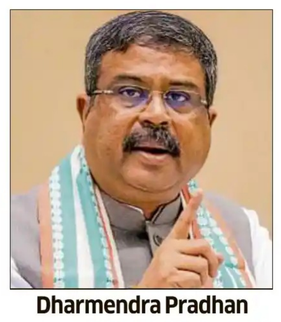
Further, the Bill's raison d'être is not national security. Courts tackled all the reasons mentioned in the statement of objectives during the lengthy litigation. The Bill is also vulnerable on the ground of violating cadre officers' fundamental rights under Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution.

(The writer is a retired BSF additional director general)

Stalin fires up poll trail over CBSE new framework

ETB SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

M K Stalin



Dharmendra Pradhan

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Saturday made a scathing attack on the Narendra Modi government for introducing the three-language formula in CBSE's overhauled framework and dared the party stalwarts in Delhi to campaign by promising to implement it in the southern state.

The lambasting came a day after the CBSE announced its plan to introduce a three-language formula from Class 6, aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. After Stalin opposed the move on Saturday morning, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said NEP prioritises the mother tongue, giving all Tamil-speaking students the opportunity to excel in their language.

In retaliation, Stalin, who was addressing an election rally in Sankarankovil, said the minister's statement was irresponsible and reckless, and reflect an entrenched disregard for India's plurality, federal values and respect for states.

"Tamil Nadu firmly rejects (the) Three Language Policy. This is not about opposing languages, but about resisting imposition and defending Constitutional rights," he said, adding that Tamil Nadu would not abandon its proven two-language policy.

The chief minister also took note of Pradhan's statement that the DMK government was not allowing the educational infrastructure to improve in Tamil Nadu.

"It is the same Pradhan who has not released funds due to our state just because we oppose the three-language policy. I challenge Pradhan, Prime Minister Modi and Amit Shah to canvass for votes in Tamil Nadu by openly declaring that they will implement the three-language policy. Does any one of you have the guts?" Stalin said.

He also said the Centre's claim that there was "no Hindi imposition" was dishonest because "when a policy structurally corners non-Hindi speaking states like Tamil Nadu into adopting a third language with little real choice, and when crucial education funding is tied to compliance, it ceases to be a matter of choice".

In his criticism, Stalin did not spare AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami, saying the latter should hang his head in shame for not condemning the statement. "You head a party which has the name of Dravidian legend C N Annadurai. I dare you to condemn Pradhan and ask him to retract his statement," Stalin said.

No payment hurdles for Iranian oil, says Centre

Ministry dismisses claims of tanker diversion to China

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Fishermen wait for transportation after arriving at Chennai airport on Saturday following their evacuation from Iran. AFP

The Central govt on Saturday said Indian refiners were buying crude oil from Iran to secure oil supplies amid disruptions in energy flows due to the ongoing West Asia conflict, and that there are no payment-related difficulties.

The Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas also dismissed reports that an India-bound oil tanker carrying Iranian crude had been rerouted mid-voyage to China due to "payment issues".

Although the ministry did not share how much Iranian fuel was being bought, it marked a reversal from when India stopped purchasing Iranian crude following 2019's US sanctions.

The government also confirmed that a tanker carrying 44,000 tonnes of Iranian LPG berthed at Mangaluru on April 2 and was discharging its cargo.

This is the first time the Ministry confirmed that it was buying fuel from Iran after the US' one-month sanction waiver.

"The news reports and social media posts of an Iranian crude cargo being diverted from Vadinar, India to China due to 'payment issues' are factually incorrect. India imports crude oil from 40+ countries, with companies having full flexibility to source oil from different sources & geographies based on commercial considerations," the Petroleum Ministry said in a post on X.

The ministry further said refiners have secured their crude oil requirements, including from Iran. "There is no payment hurdle for Iranian crude imports, contrary to the rumours being circulated," it said.

Another Indian ship sails through Strait of Hormuz

Another Indian-flagged ship — Green Sanvi — carrying LPG has safely passed through the Strait of Hormuz, said the Central government in a statement on Saturday, reports DHNS from New Delhi.

This is the seventh LPG carrier flying the Indian flag to cross the Strait and sail towards the country.

"Green Sanvi has safely transited the Strait of Hormuz, carrying 46,650 MT of LPG cargo with 25 seafarers on board," noted the statement.

Another 17 ships bound for India are waiting to cross the Strait. These Indian-flagged vessels have 460 Indian seafarers aboard them.

The Central government has been in discussions with Iranian authorities to facilitate the passage of Indian vessels through the Strait amid a maritime blockade linked to the ongoing West Asia conflict.

Indian Navy warships were on standby to assist merchant vessels if required, said official sources.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Petroleum has said that 5-kg cylinders are available with LPG distributors and can be obtained with a valid ID, and no address proof is required.

Over 71,000 5-kg cylinders were sold on Friday, and 5.7 lakh had been distributed since 23 March, it said.

The ministry said gas supply to fertiliser plants was expected to go up by about 90% of the six-month average consumption from April 6.

I go to Parl to create impact, not ruckus: Chadha hits back at AAP

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Insisting that he goes to Parliament to create impact and not ruckus, Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha on Saturday hit back at AAP, calling its allegations against him "blatant lies" and warning his party with a 'Dhurandhar' movie dialogue, "I am injured, so I am dangerous."

Raghav Chadha

His response came as AAP leaders Sanjay Singh, Atishi and Saurabh Bharadwaj, among others, defended the party's decision to strip him of the Deputy Leader post in Rajya Sabha while alleging that he refused to sign the Opposition notice seeking the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and did not join the Opposition walkout and attack the ruling BJP.

Chadha said he initially thought of not responding to the "scripted campaign" with the "same language" and "same allegations" but chose to do so as there was a possibility that some people may take it as truth if a "lie is repeated 100 times".

In a video posted on 'X', he called the claims that he did not join Opposition walkouts a "blatant lie".

Challenging AAP leaders to cite even a single instance where he failed to participate, he said one could check CCTV cameras in Parliament.

On not signing the removal notice against Kumar, he said no party leader had asked him, either formally or informally, to sign it and asked if he was being singled out, even though six or seven of the 10 AAP MPs had not signed it.

Referring to the claim that he was not raising serious issues and that he was scared to attack the BJP, he said, "I have gone to Parliament to create impact and not ruckus."

"Every lie will be exposed. 'Ghayal hoon, isliye Chatak hoon' (I am injured, so I am dangerous)," he said.

Probe into 'fake encounter' intensifies in J&K's Ganderbal

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

A day after the J&K Home Department ordered a magisterial inquiry into an alleged fake encounter in central Kashmir's Ganderbal, the police have questioned several individuals to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the killing of a 29-year-old postgraduate.

The probe was ordered following directions from Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha after the deceased's family contested the official version of events.

The army said Rashid Ahmad Mughal was a "terrorist" killed during an encounter earlier this week, a claim disputed by his family.

Sources said multiple people, including the brother of the deceased, have been questioned so far as part of the ongoing investigation.

A senior police officer said the case is under investigation and all aspects are being examined. "We are looking into the circumstances of the incident and collecting evidence. The facts will be established," he said.

Officials said the magisterial inquiry ordered by the home department will examine the circumstances leading to the killing, including the sequence of events that led to the operation.

Rajasthan HC removes critical remarks on new transgender law

JODHPUR, PTI: The Rajasthan High Court has revised the epilogue of its recent judgment on transgender reservation, in which it made critical observations on the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026, saying it took away their right to self-identify their gender.

The bench of Justice Arun Monga and Justice Yogendra Kumar Purohit refused to delete the epilogue entirely but agreed that some paragraphs in it should not have been there.

The revision comes three days after the court's March 30 ruling in a petition challenging a 2023 state notification placing transgender persons within the OBC category without a distinct reservation framework.

Amaravati on fast track as Naidu sets inauguration goal

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

Soon after Parliament passed the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Amendment Bill recognising Amaravati as the state capital, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has set an ambitious target of getting Prime Minister Narendra Modi to inaugurate select projects in the city.

Chandrababu Naidu

Last year, Modi relaunched Amaravati's construction. Capital works worth Rs 57,821 crore are currently at various stages of completion, of which projects worth Rs 50,943 crore have already been grounded.

Roads, trunk infrastructure, LPS amenities and iconic structures — including the Assembly, high court and Secretariat buildings — are all actively under construction.

On Saturday, Naidu reviewed the ongoing works with senior officials of the AP Capital Regional Development Authority (APCRDA). He stressed that construction must proceed as per schedule, and called for an accelerated pace across all sites so that the PM could inaugurate the projects at the earliest.

Naidu also assessed progress with various contracting agencies, and directed officials to continuously monitor timelines for prompt delivery.

Dissatisfaction over delays

The CM expressed dissatisfaction with delays by certain agencies. Contractors claimed elections in several states had prompted workers to return to their home districts.

Naidu advised them to maximise the use of locally available skilled labour. He also directed that weekly and monthly targets be established and strictly adhered to.

Reiterating that there was no funding shortage for the capital's construction, he urged contractors handling multiple projects to sharpen their focus. He emphasised quality, cost-effectiveness and the adoption of green energy and advanced technologies throughout the construction process.

Naidu also expressed displeasure over the negligence of construction agencies in securing materials on-site. He noted that such lapses were opening up the government to criticism. Amaravati, he said, must emerge as a future-ready city built on innovation and excellence.

DEFENCE PUSH

Big boost to Aatmanirbharta! India to develop 1,000-kg bomb

NEW DELHI, PTI

The defence ministry has initiated the process for the indigenous design and development of a 1000-kg aerial bomb akin to Mk-84 for the IAF, aiming to boost India's 'Aatmanirbharta' in the sector, according to senior officials.

The project is structured in two phases. The first involves design and development of six prototypes (live and inert), including associated tail units and equipment, they said. The second is the procurement phase, which will commence with the issuance of a commercial Request for Proposal (RFP) to the qualifying development agencies.

The system is intended to be "compatible with both Russian and Western-origin aircraft" currently operated by the Indian Air Force (IAF), a senior official said.

The ministry has "issued an Expression of Interest (EoI) for design, development and procurement of 1,000-kg aerial bombs (akin to Mk-84) along with tail units and associated equipment under the provisions of the Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020", the official said.

The project will be executed under the 'Make-II' (industry-funded) sub-category, followed by procurement under the 'Buy (Indian–IDDM)' category. IDDM stands for Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured.

A total of "600 aerial bombs are planned to be procured" under the 'Buy (Indian–IDDM)' category in accordance with the DAP 2020 provisions, the officials said.

At present, Mk-84 class general-purpose bombs are procured from foreign original equipment manufacturers and are in service with the IAF, the senior official said.

The proposed aerial bomb is described as a "natural fragmentation, high-calibre munition capable of generating high blast effect and significant peak over-pressure (PoP) against enemy targets", they said.

Participation in the EoI is open to eligible Indian entities, including the private industry, with provisions for foreign collaboration under defined conditions, such as joint ventures, transfer of technology, or commercial off-the-shelf arrangements.

Evaluation of responses will be based on financial and technical criteria.

Fresh snowfall blankets Machel Bhawan Mandir and its surroundings in the remote Padder area of Kishtwar district, in Jammu and Kashmir, on Saturday. PTI

DH DECCAN HERALD

Political Theatre

The CM is sacrificing governance to protect his children. His past actions had trapped him, with the people of Kerala bearing the consequence

Poll vault

Roll dice, play poll

"Khela Hobe" (game is on) was the ruling Trinamool's war cry in 2021, when it thwarted the BJP's bid to win West Bengal. Five years later, as it seeks to hold its ground against the saffron onslaught, the TMC has unveiled a new game—quite literally. It has turned "Snakes and Ladders" into a campaign tool for door-to-door distribution. The customised board game features state welfare schemes as ladders. It also depicts faces of PM Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and state BJP leaders as snakeheads, ready to send players sliding down the board. The final square reads "Joy Bangla" (Hail Bengal)—the TMC's signature slogan.

ANIRBAN BHAUMIK, KOLKATA

CPM ousted

For the first time since 1967, the CPM has not fielded any candidate in Madurai, one of the cities where the party still wields influence. The DMK, which leads the Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA), has not allotted any of the district's 10 seats to the CPM. In the 2021 elections, the party contested Thiruparankundram but lost. In the past, it had fielded candidates in at least one of the 10 seats, either in alliance or independently. This time, the DMK is contesting seven seats, the Congress two, and the MDMK one.

ETB SIVAPRIYAN, CHENNAI

Meet the leader

Kunki Choudhury
Assam Jatiya Parishad
Central Guwahati

Twenty-seven-year-old Kunki Choudhury entered politics barely two weeks ago and is contesting the prestigious Central Guwahati Assembly seat for the Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP), a regional ally in the Congress-led front.

She, however, shot into the spotlight after Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma referred to her mother as a "beef eater," saying it went against Sanatani Hindu culture. He also shared an Instagram post in which her mother allegedly posted a photo of beef and supported Sharjeel Imam. Her mother has denied the allegations.

Kunki studied at the Mumbai-based Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies before pursuing higher education at University College London. After joining the AJP, she began a door-to-door campaign focusing on Guwahati's persistent issues of artificial flooding, waste management, and drainage.

"Whatever the CM is saying is false. I joined politics barely two weeks ago, and his remarks have made me popular," Kunki said, as social media saw widespread criticism of Sarma's comments.

Kunki is contesting against the BJP's Vijay Kumar Gupta and the Trinamool Congress's Avijit Majumdar.

Trivia

DMK founder CN Annadurai was the only politician in Tamil Nadu to have served as a member of the Legislative Assembly, the now-defunct Legislative Council, the Lok Sabha, and the Rajya Sabha. An eloquent speaker with equal command over Tamil and English, Annadurai was first elected to the Assembly in 1957 from his hometown, Kanchipuram, but lost the seat in 1962. He was then nominated to the RS in 1962 and served until 1967, when he contested the Lok Sabha elections from South Madras and won. However, as the DMK swept the Assembly polls, Annadurai was sworn in as Chief Minister and resigned as an MP. He later served as a member of the Legislative Council until his death in 1969.

Gogoi: People of Assam fed up with misgovernance, ready for Cong return

At 43, **Gaurav Gogoi** is young, educated, and vocal not just in public but also inside Parliament. His Lok Sabha election victory thrice in a row from Assam since 2014 led the Congress to appoint him its state unit president and project him as the leader of the Opposition camp against the BJP and its allies for the April 9 Assembly elections.

Amid the busy campaign schedule, Gogoi told **Sumir Karmakar** of *DH* in an interview that people look to the Opposition for positive politics and inclusive governance. Excerpts:

What makes you confident about the Congress returning to power in Assam after 10 years?

People of Assam are extremely resentful of the politics under Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. He has promoted those with ties to the mafia and illegal syndicates. When the political leadership is connected to such elements, the state of affairs suffers. Assam's economy, law and order, education and healthcare and overall governance are all in decline.

People are fed up with this misgovernance. In the Congress-led coalition, they see a politics of positivity — of ideas, mindset towards society, respect for all religions, castes, languages, and communities. That is what they want, and that gives us confidence.

Several Congress leaders have quit and joined the BJP. How has this trend impacted Congress prospects?

I think more high-profile leaders have left the BJP since Sarma took over than those who left the Congress. Former Union minister Rajen Gohain has left, as did tribal leader and former minister Nandita Gorlosa.

Many former MLAs have quit because they felt there was no space for them in the BJP, as Sarma gives importance to those who left the Congress and joined him. The BJP is much more divided, while the Congress is more robust.

ASSAM
Assembly Poll

The BJP and Sarma say securing the indigenous people's identity is the key issue in this election. What are the real issues?

Let me expose his hypocrisy. He talks about protecting indigenous Assamese identity, yet during Rajya Sabha elections, he relied on support from Badruddin Ajmal-headed AIUDF.

He speaks about Hindus, but then gets AIDUF MLAs to join the AGP — an NDA constituent. Then he promotes those who have links with cow syndicates. He has also stalled Scheduled Tribe status for six major ethnic communities, while large tracts of protected tribal land, close to 12,000 acres, have been transferred to corporate interests.

So, he is not in favour of any community. This kind of hypocrisy from the CM really disturbs the people. That is why people want change.

Assam Congress chief and candidate from Jorhat constituency Gaurav Gogoi (centre) during a roadshow. PTI FILE

Scan QR code to watch video

The foreigner issue has long been central in Assam. What solution do you offer?

If you compare records, the Congress has done far more on deporting illegal migrants from Bangladesh. We started the entire exercise of updating the National Register of Citizens to address the issue, but the BJP left it incomplete.

On border fencing, why aren't they able to prevent smuggling and trafficking from Bangladesh, even when there is a double-engine government? The Congress understands the problem. We signed the Assam Accord and remain committed to its constitutional safeguards under Clause 6.

The Congress has, for the first time, stitched an alliance with two regional parties: the Raijor Dal and the Assam Jatiya Parishad. How will this help?

People see that our ideologies complement each other. The Raijor Dal comes from a farmer-based movement, while the AJP represents regionalism, and the Congress practices the politics of nationalism.

Along with other groups, we have built a rainbow coalition that reflects Assam's diversity. People believe this can deliver a progressive government.

Sarma has accused you and your family of links to Pakistan. Your response?

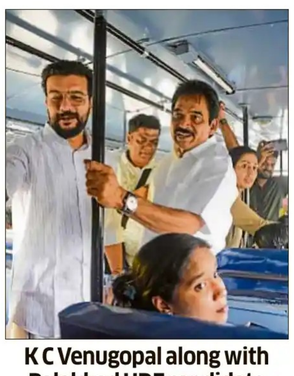
It shows that Sarma is insecure, anxious, and so desperate that he can lie about national security. I must say these attacks have only ended up benefiting my political career.

Leaders sweat it out as Palakkad sizzles

Canvassing in full swing even as mercury reaches close to 40°C

FROM THE GROUND

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
PALAKKAD (KERALA), DHNS



K C Venugopal along with Palakkad UDF candidate Ramesh Pisharody during a campaign in Palakkad.

The mercury is soaring in Palakkad, and no, it is not the scorching summer that people are talking about. With the election closing in, political parties feel the heat, both literally and figuratively.

As one deboards a train at Palakkad, the heat is palpable. Amidst the hot breeze, campaign vehicles of Congress, CPM and BJP keep moving around even when the sun is overhead. The temperature here is already close to 40°C.

KERALA
Assembly Poll

"It is the elections that are hotter here. We are now quite used to this peak summer," Chenthamara, an autorickshaw driver, rightly points out.

Two more factors adding to the sizzle are NMR Biryani and sitting MLA Rahul Mamkootathil, who was expelled from the Congress after allegations of sexual misconduct.

CPM has fielded NMR Razak, one of the owners of the family run NMR Biryani house in Palakkad, as an independent candidate. Razak needs no introduction in the constituency.

While Congress-led United Democratic Front would get substantial Muslim votes, the CPM's move to field Razak seems to have brought cheer to the BJP camp as there could be a split in the Muslim votes.

Though Palakkad is used to witnessing a direct fight between the Congress and CPM and both alternately winning elections, the former won the seat in the last four elections, including a bypoll. BJP became the runner-up in the last three elections.

Shafi Parambil, who won with a margin of 7,403 in 2011, improved it to 17,483 in 2016. But in 2021, Metro Man E Sreedharan, who was projected as BJP's chief minister candidate, gave a tough fight to Shafi by bringing down his margin to 3,859. But in the 2024 bypoll following Shafi's shift to the Lok Sabha, Mamkootathil improved the victory margin to 18,840.

Mamkootathil is out of the picture now; but even after the damage that the scandal has done, many like Sabrit, the first woman autorickshaw driver in the town, are still indebted to the support received from Shafi Parambil and former CM Oommen Chandy. "Shafi helped me meet Oommen Chandy... Thus, I got financial assistance to buy this autorickshaw."

BJP firebrand leader Shobha Surendran, who is now contesting from Palakkad, had brought the saffron party to the second place here in 2016.

Even as actor, TV personality and stand-up comedian Ramesh Pisharody fielded by the Congress is new to electoral politics, he is also putting up a good fight like any seasoned politician.

However, with some minority outfits already stating that they would ensure BJP's defeat in seats where the saffron party has some hope, chances of last minute undercurrents are high in the keenly watched central Kerala town.

Amid such evolving equations, it is to be seen how the political parties withstand, and even beat, the summer heat.

VCK chief's exit from election race signals DMK unease

CHENNAI, DHNS

Thol Thirumavalavan, chief of prominent Dalit party Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK), on Saturday did a volte-face by withdrawing his candidature for the April 23 Assembly elections from Kattumannarkoil constituency.

Thol Thirumavalavan

He has now fielded E Jothimani, son of prominent Dalit leader and former Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) chief L Elayaperumal, from the seat.

TAMIL NADU
Assembly Poll

Thirumavalavan's decision comes amid intense speculation that DMK, which leads the Secular Progressive Alliance, of which VCK is a part, was not happy with him entering the fray.

An outspoken leader who has fought for Dalit emancipation for the past three decades, Thirumavalavan said last week that his decision to contest the Assembly elections was taken since he expected the political situation in Tamil Nadu to undergo a transformation.

Currently, the decision of the Lok Sabha MP from Chidambaram led to criticism from opposition parties that he might be eyeing a share in power post-elections if DMK does not get a majority of its own. It is said DMK was also unhappy with Thirumavalavan contesting the elections since it would create a confusion.

"I am changing my strategy. Changing the strategy during a battle is also a strategy. I have decided not to contest the Assembly elections. But people who are against our alliance created a propaganda that I am plunging into the state politics eyeing a share in power," Thirumavalavan said.

He hope that the DMK alliance will win 200 seats.

POLITICAL PITCH

Left Front chairman Biman Bose (centre), CPM leader Sridip Bhattacharya (left) and CPI leader Swapan Banerjee (right) release the poll manifesto in Kolkata on Saturday. PTI

Sunetra to file papers for Baramati bypoll tomorrow amid Cong oppn

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and NCP national president Sunetra Pawar is set to file her nomination on Monday for the April 23 by-election to the Baramati Assembly seat.

Sunetra Pawar

The Congress plans to field a candidate against her, a move opposed by its Maha Vikas Aghadi partners—the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) and the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT).

The polls were necessitated by the death of the then deputy CM Ajit Pawar, an eight-time MLA from Baramati.

Differences have also cropped up within the Congress over the move to contest polls from Baramati. Further, it has widened the rift within the crisis-ridden MVA, which is part of the Congress-led I.N.D.I.A Opposition bloc.

"As of now, the message is that we are contesting the elections; we can't say about tomorrow. The message is that unopposed by-elections should always have a reciprocation," a senior Congress leader told *DH* on Saturday.

NCP (SP) working president and Baramati MP Supriya Sule and NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar had earlier announced that they would not be putting up a candidate.

However, the possibility of an uncontested election now appears unlikely, as three candidates have already filed their nominations.

BJP releases 5th list for Bengal

NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, PTI: The BJP on Saturday announced its fifth list of five candidates for the West Bengal Assembly elections.

According to the list, Saurav Sikdar will contest from Dum Dum Uttar, Taraknath Chatterjee (Krishnanagar Uttar), Anupam Biswas (Kalyani), Anindya Raju Banerjee (Madhyamgram), and Rudraprasad Banerjee from Uluberia Purba.

Saurav Sikdar is the nephew of former Union minister Tapan Sikdar, while Anindya Raju Banerjee had unsuccessfully contested in 2021.

Meanwhile, amid sustained protests by party workers, the BJP has been compelled to change its candidates in three seats.

KNOTS & TIES

Congress at war with allies in poll season

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

FRIENDLY FIRE

- In Kerala, Congress' diatribe against national ally CPM is undermining the I.N.D.I.A bloc's credibility
- Congress also said BJP was using parties like AAP and TMC to achieve its objective of 'Congress-mukt Bharat'
- There were whispers about the Congress leaving the Mahagathbandhan in Bihar, where elections were held last year

The upcoming Assembly elections are exposing the strains in the I.N.D.I.A bloc with the Congress flexing muscles especially in states where it is playing second fiddle in a bid to expand its influence.

While in Tamil Nadu, the Congress has failed to cut a meaningful deal with its ally DMK, in Kerala, its criticism of the national ally CPM has queered the pitch for the bloc on a larger spectrum.

The run-up to the Assembly elections saw doubts being sown in the party about the viability of the DMK-led alliance with a section in the Congress arguing for a handshake with TVK, led by actor Vijay.

The DMK stood its ground during the seat-sharing talks and the Congress had to settle for 28 seats, up from 25 seats last time, but not the choicest constituencies. Party leaders in favour of snapping ties with DMK were of the view that organisationally, the party was suffering under the alliance.

In Kerala, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi's diatribe against national ally CPM and the Left is having a larger consequence.

Sources said both Kharge and Rahul had to go for the jugular under pressure from the grassroots with the Congress hoping to snatch power from the Left in Kerala. They targeted Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Also, Rahul's narrative about a secret deal between CPM and BJP has undermined the bloc's joint mission to defeat BJP at the Centre.

CPM and CPI Parliamentary leaders raised the issue at a floor leaders' meeting last month, saying such "invariably weaken the coherence" of the Opposition bloc.

The Congress' attack on the CPM, calling it 'Communist Janata Party', comes at a time when both sides stand together on national issues inside and outside Parliament while some other allies take independent stands.

This apart, soon after Arvind Kejriwal got relief in the liquor scam case, the Congress said BJP was using parties like AAP and Trinamool Congress to achieve its objective of "Congress-mukt Bharat". Both Rahul and Kharge had called Kejriwal a "B-Team of BJP".

In Bihar, where elections were held last year, there were whispers about the Congress leaving the Mahagathbandhan, which includes the Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Left parties. During Haryana elections in late 2024, the Samajwadi Party's attempts to get a seat hit the Congress wall. Now, there are speculations about the Congress and the Samajwadi Party cutting a deal for the Uttar Pradesh elections early next year.

Its Uttar Pradesh in-charge Avinash Pande has already said the party is making preparations in all 403 seats and had said that the I.N.D.I.A bloc's doors are open for BSP.

UNCERTAINTY European allies question US commitment as tensions rise over Iran war

Every Trump threat to leave Nato alliance hollows it out

NYT NEWS SERVICE

Since his re-election, President Donald Trump has threatened several times to leave the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) alliance. On Wednesday, he did it again, frustrated that European nations had refused to join the so-far indecisive US-Israeli war against Iran.

But the more he disparages Nato and threatens to abandon it, the more hollow it becomes.

The alliance, built after World War II to deter the Soviet Union and keep the peace in Europe, is in crisis, with some questioning whether it can survive. The West Asia war has brought existing doubts about American commitment to the alliance to the fore, argued Ivo Daalder, a former US ambassador to Nato. "It's hard to see how any European country will now be able and willing to trust the United States to come to its defence," he said.

In his speech to the nation on Wednesday night, Trump did not mention Nato, to the relief of allies. But a senior European official said he thought most Europeans did not believe that Article 5, the Nato commitment to collective defence, still had teeth. The United States now seems part of the problem of world disorder, the official said, speaking anonymously, given the sensitivity of the topic. On Thursday, speaking in Seoul, South Korea, President Emmanuel Macron of France was explicit: Trump was undermining Nato with his repeated threats to pull out of it. "If you create daily doubt about your commitment, you hollow it out," he said.

Last week, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, reflecting Trump's unhappiness with European allies, warned that relations with Nato would need to be re-examined after the war in Iran is resolved. "Without the United States, there is no Nato," Rubio said. "An alliance has to be mutually beneficial. It cannot be a one-way street."

Others are not so sure. The US is the nerve centre and backbone of the alliance, because Washington has always wanted it that way. But Europe is hardly helpless, and it is spending much more money on the military now, in part because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and in part because of Trump's demands, including previous threats to leave the alliance unless its members "paid up." Even if Washington were to pull out the 70,000 US troops in Europe, a European Nato would be conceivable, senior European officials say. The Nato command system and infrastructure remain, and Europeans could fill most of the roles. There have been various studies about what Europe would need to do to replace the US contribution in conventional warfare.

One study, by the International Institute for Strategic Studies last May, gave a rough cost estimate over 25 years of $1 trillion. Bruegel, a research institution in Brussels, did a similar study a year ago with the Kiel Institute for the World Economy and estimated that Europe could need 300,000 more troops and an annual increase in military spending of at least $290 billion in the short term to deter Russian aggression.

Camille Grand, a former Nato assistant secretary-general for defence investment, wrote his own detailed study of the gaps Europe would need to fill to replace the United States.

People hold placards that read "Leave Nato! Destroy Nato!", during an anti-war protest near the US embassy, in Ankara on Saturday. REUTERS

Trump officials have said that Europeans should manage conventional defence while Washington maintains its nuclear umbrella. The deadline to do so, most agree, is 2029. Gen Carsten Breuer, who leads the German military, has warned that by then, Russia will most likely be able to launch a serious attack on Nato. But German and Nato forces can put up a very good fight before then, he said.

As Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski of Poland said of Europe last year, "We don't need to be as good as the United States. We only need to be better than Russia." What is irreplaceable is the American nuclear umbrella over Europe, which Trump has repeatedly vowed to maintain. But European nations are actively discussing alternatives.

Britain and France, the two nuclear powers in Europe, along with Germany and Sweden, have been discussing how to extend their nuclear umbrella to at least approximate the American one. France has said it will increase its own nuclear stockpile, and Britain has said it will re-create an air-based leg of nuclear-capable bombers to add to its nuclear submarines. Still, the British nuclear deterrent is dependent on US technology, and the French one is designed to protect French interests.

The impulse for Europe to do more has been underscored by Trump's decision to bomb Iran without consultation and then demand help. To many, like Bruno Maçães, former secretary of state for European affairs for Portugal, the US "excursion" looks like a defeat.

"This will give a big push to Europe," he said. "It's not just wanting the US to be there for us; it's the sense now that the US won't be capable even if it is willing." For Europe, he said, "it's making the choice between autonomy and America sharper every month." Despite Trump's frustration, many wonder how destroying the alliance would benefit the US. Wolfgang Ischinger, a former German ambassador to US, said on social media that leaving Nato would be a gift to Russia. "Let's be clear that removing US troops from Europe would finally allow Russia to declare strategic victory: pushing the US out of Europe has been the primary strategic objective of the Kremlin, in Soviet times and ever since," he wrote. "Is that something the US can allow to happen?"

For Nicholas Burns, a former US ambassador to Nato, pulling out would be "catastrophic for America as a global power". He said he would be astonished if Congress agreed.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

A protester in a frog costume takes part in a rally against the use of pesticides, just days before World Health Day, in Paris on Saturday. AFP

India-born Rini Sampath in race for Washington DC mayor

▸ Tamil Nadu-born Rini Sampath has become the first South Asian candidate to be on the ballot for the mayoral primary in Washington DC, PTI reports from Washington.

The 31-year-old government contractor from the Democratic Party has based her campaign on the theme 'Fix the Basics' and the promise of "A new DC". "I'm not a politician. I don't owe any special interest groups. It's time for an outsider who is relentlessly focused on fixing our basic city services," Sampath says on her campaign website. Born in Theni in Tamil Nadu, she moved to the US as a seven-year-old and has been a resident of Washington DC for more than a decade. "It's clear we have a real path to victory. In just four weeks, we made the mayoral ballot as the first South Asian candidate in DC history to do it. That's what a lean, people-powered campaign can accomplish. Imagine what we could do with the resources to reach every voter across the city," she said. Washington DC is overwhelmingly dominated by Democrats, and the city has never had a Republican mayor since elections to the post began in 1975. Before that, it was administered by a Board of Commissioners appointed by the US president.

Russia, Ukraine trade deadly strikes

▸ Russia and Ukraine traded deadly strikes overnight and on Saturday morning, killing 10 people and wounding several dozen more, AP/PTI reports from Kyiv.

The attacks came as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy travelled to Istanbul for talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He will also meet Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of Eastern Orthodox Christians. "We are working to strengthen our partnership to ensure the real protection of lives, advance stability, and guarantee security in Europe and West Asia. Joint efforts always yield the best results," Zelenskyy said in a post on the messaging app Telegram after arriving in Istanbul. Russia fired 286 drones at Ukraine overnight, 260 of which were downed, the Ukrainian Air Force said in an online statement.

Strike near Iran nuclear site heightens radioactive fears

Officials inspect a damaged building of the Shahid Beheshti University following a strike in Tehran on Saturday. AFP

TEL AVIV/WASHINGTON, AP/PTI

An airstrike near Iran's Bushehr nuclear facility has heightened fears of radioactive fallout, even as the US military pressed ahead on Saturday in a frantic search for a missing pilot over a remote area in southwestern Iran.

The Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran said the strike killed a guard and damaged a support building, prompting the evacuation of about 198 workers. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned that the effects of any fallout would be felt most keenly by the country's Gulf neighbours.

Araghchi said continued attacks on the plant on Iran's southern coast could eventually lead to radioactive fallout that would "end life in GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) capitals, not Tehran". Bushehr is considerably closer to Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar than it is to the Iranian capital.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration has revoked the green cards or US visas of at least four Iranians connected to the current or former Iranian government, including two who have been detained by immigration authorities and are to be deported.

The latest actions were taken just this week when Secretary of State Marco Rubio determined they were no longer eligible for either lawful permanent resident status, or to enter the US. The steps follow a move late last year in which the visas of several diplomats and staffers at Iran's mission to the United Nations were also revoked.

US revokes green cards and visas of several Iranian nationals

US detains Soleimani's relatives

US federal agents have detained the niece and grand-niece of late Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani after Secretary of State Marco Rubio revoked their lawful permanent resident status, Reuters reports.

"Hamideh Soleimani Afshar and her daughter are now in the custody of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement," the State Department said, adding that Rubio had revoked their green cards. Soleimani was killed in a January 2020 US airstrike in Baghdad.

75 women may benefit from settlement in Epstein case

NEW YORK, AP/PTI: Lawyers say up to 75 women who were sexually abused by Jeffrey Epstein since 2008 may benefit from a $72.5 million fund set up as part of a settlement Bank of America reached with lawyers representing the women.

US District Judge Jed S Rakoff gave the deal preliminary approval on Thursday and set a final approval hearing for August 27. He also ordered lawyers to submit to him by Friday a broader list of publications to be used to notify Epstein victims that the settlement fund exists.

The judge said he wanted to ensure "nobody is left out". Lawyers for women abused by Epstein had sued the bank, saying it ignored suspicious transactions involving Epstein that occurred while he was abusing women from June 2008 to his arrest in early July 2019.

Epstein died in August 2019 in a Manhattan federal jail. The death was ruled a suicide. At the hearing on Thursday, attorney David Boies said lawyers for the victims believed between 60 and 75 women would make claims that would make them eligible for payouts from the settlement fund.

Pakistan would hit Kolkata in future conflict with India, says Khawaja Asif

LAHORE/KARACHI, PTI

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Saturday warned India that it would respond with a strike on Kolkata to any "future misadventures".

"If India tries to stage any false-flag operation this time, then, God willing, we will take it to Kolkata," Asif said while speaking to reporters in his hometown of Sialkot, about 130 km from Lahore.

He claimed that there are reports of a false-flag operation being planned using their own men or Pakistanis in detention, by placing bodies somewhere and claiming "they were terrorists and had done so and so".

He did not provide any evidence to support his claim.

On Thursday, Asif said Pakistan's response to any attack would be "swift, calibrated and decisive".

Asif was responding to remarks by his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh, who earlier said that any "misadventure" from India's neighbour in the prevailing situation would invite "unprecedented and decisive" action.

Pakistan's Naval Chief, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, on Saturday said that any attempt to challenge the country's maritime interests would be met with an appropriate response.

Admiral Ashraf made the remarks while speaking during the induction of the second Milgem-class corvette, PNS Khaibar, into the fleet. He also claimed that, during the brief conflict with India in May last year, the Pakistan Navy was poised to sink India's aircraft carrier, adding that this forced the Indian warship and its escorts to retreat. "Any attempt to challenge Pakistan's maritime interests will be met with an appropriate response," Ashraf was quoted as saying in a statement issued by the Pakistan Navy.

The Pahalgam attack, which took place on April 22 last year, resulted in a four-day conflict between the two countries.

Nasa astronaut Reid Wiseman peers out of one of the Orion spacecraft's main cabin windows, looking back at Earth, as the crew travels towards the Moon. REUTERS

Artemis II crew halfway to Moon

▸ Now more than halfway to the Moon, the Artemis II astronauts were toasted by Canada on Saturday as they prepared for their historic lunar fly-around, set to push deeper into space than even the Apollo astronauts, AP/PTI reports from Washington.

The three Americans and one Canadian will reach their destination on Monday, photographing the mysterious lunar far side as they zoom around it. It is the first Moon-bound crew in more than 53 years, picking up where Nasa's Apollo programme left off.

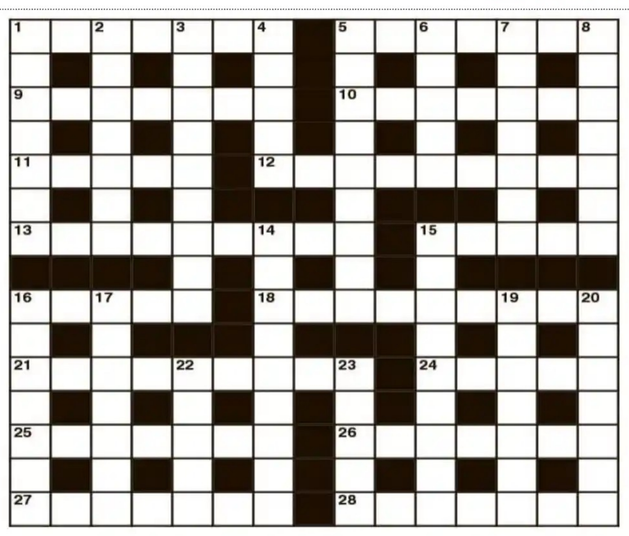
Artemis II is poised to set a distance record for humans, travelling more than 400,000 km from Earth before making a U-turn behind the Moon and heading home without stopping or entering lunar orbit. The record is currently held by Apollo 13.

Factory fire near Dhaka kills five

▸ A fire broke out at a factory manufacturing gas lighters near Bangladesh's capital on Saturday, leaving at least five people dead, AP/PTI reports from Dhaka.

The blaze broke out in the Kadamtali area of Keraniganj near Dhaka, according to the fire service and civil defence. Seven firefighting units were deployed to extinguish the blaze, which started in the afternoon, the fire department said. It took several hours to bring it under control. Firefighters recovered five bodies by the evening, but they could not be immediately identified.

◆ SUNDAY CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 2674 ◆



ACROSS
1 Come safely through (7)
5 Sports ground and stands (7)
9 Reference (7)
10 Member of gang of bandits (7)
11 Prickle (5)
12 At risk (2,3,4)
13 Inference (9)
15 Skilful board game (5)
16 Ornate (5)
18 Set up an ambush (3,2,4)
21 Happen to meet (3,6)
24 Magnanimous (5)
25 Betrayal (4-3)
26 Inconsistent (7)
27 Cowboy film (7)
28 Compunction (7)

DOWN
1 A woollen fabric (7)
2 Run away furtively (7)
3 Loud clamour (3,3,3)
4 Proportion (5)
5 Solidity (9)
6 Tolerate (5)
7 Picture to oneself (7)
8 Insanity (7)
14 Obtained by unlawful means (3-6)
15 Puzzling question (9)
16 Anticipated (7)
17 Completely perplex (7)
19 Judge (7)
20 Molasses (7)
22 Tedious domestic task (5)
23 Diaphanous (5)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 4034

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 8, Loa-the-d 9, Stockroom 13, Train 14, Run on 15, Tract-or 16, Betroth 17, Thine 18, Human 20, E-(lon) gret 22, Mor-a-l-e 23, Bustle 25, Cart-O-on 27, Pate-lla 30, Stills 31, Di-g out 32, L-ott-o 35, G-reen 36, Over-t(he) 37, Ennoble 39, Turns on 41, To-ni-c (rev.) 42, Lined 43, Not on time 44, Sni-G-ger.
DOWN: 1, Ho-bar-t 2, St-and out 3, Beer shampoo 4, Stand idle 5, Scatter 6, Dream house 7, Dolt 10, Stable 11, In store 12, Franc-E 19, Mate-lot 21, Realise 24, Battle scene 26, Talent show 28, Disentomb 29, C-ont-ent 30, Sights (cites) 32, Long legs 33, Over-do 34, Co-rnets 38, B-Anne-r 40, Rook.

EASY
ACROSS: 8, Camelot 9, Invisible 13, Heist 14, Adieu 15, Fanfare 16, Biscuit 17, Class 18, Incur 20, Ample 22, Carrot 23, Shandy 25, Carouse 27, Playful 30, Banana 31, Salmon 32, Tryst 35, Harem 36, Mince 37, Eternal 39, Antenna 41, Stint 42, Bowed 43, Potassium 44, Inverse.
DOWN: 1, Panics 2, Test tube 3, Romanticism 4, Incubator 5, Diffuse 6, Fiendishly 7, Elba 10, Phobia 11, Pincers 12, Betray 19, Century 21, Planner 24, Clandestine 26, Ornamental 28, Magnesium 29, Amnesia 30, Behead 32, Trembles 33, Toledo 34, Embassy 38, Newish 40, Thor.

SU DO KU X - 3876

9								
3			2		7			
		5				3		
	8			3			1	
		4	5			6		
6				2				
			9			8		6
5	1	9						
								2

SOLUTION TO 3875

3	6	8	4	5	9	7	1	2
4	5	2	3	7	1	9	8	6
9	7	1	6	8	2	5	3	4
5	1	9	2	3	4	6	7	8
8	2	6	5	9	7	3	4	1
7	4	3	1	6	8	2	9	5
2	9	7	8	1	6	4	5	3
1	3	4	7	2	5	8	6	9
6	8	5	9	4	3	1	2	7

To solve the puzzle:
The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

Pragg holds Nakamura, Sindarov on top

PAPHOS (CYPRUS), PTI

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa (**in pic**) played out a quick and easy draw with Hikaru Nakamura of United States while Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan continued with his winning ways as he beat Wei Yi of China in the sixth round of the Candidates chess tournament here on Saturday.

With each passing round, Sindarov seemed to be moving far away from the huddle and this is by far the greatest performance ever in the history of the Candidates tournaments. With his fifth victory in six games, Sindarov moved to 5.5 points awaiting other results.

Praggnanandhaa, on 3 points, is now 2.5 points behind Sindarov and it remains to be seen if the last eight games can change the fortunes of the other players in the event. For now, it seems Sindarov is well past the reach of anyone.

Praggnanandhaa played the Nimzo Indian defense as black against Nakamura who was clearly upset after his previous round loss. The American, who is now more famous as a streamer and is also called the richest chess player, did not go for any complications as a couple of minor pieces changed hands in the opening.

Praggnanandhaa decided to repeat the position quite early in the middle game.

Sindarov was pleasantly surprised by Bishops opening by Wei Yi and did not have any trouble in equalizing early with his black pieces. The Uzbek sacrificed a pawn in the middle game that was poisoned and then launched a series of threats forcing Wei Yi to complications. The game lasted just 36 moves.

Results: Round 6: Open: Hikaru Nakamura (USA, 2.5) drew with R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 3); Andrey Esipenko (Rus, 1) Fabiano Caruana (USA, 2.5) drew with Andrey Esipenko (Rus, 2); Wei Yi (CHN, 2) lt to Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb, 5.5).

Women: Bibisara Assaubayeva (Kaz, 2.5) lt to Divya Deshmukh (Ind, 3); Kateryna Lagno (Rus, 3) lt to R Vaishali (Ind, 3); Bibisara Assuabayeva (Kaz, 2.5); Zhongyi Tan (Chn, 2.5) drew with Aleksandra Goryachkina (Rus, 3); Jiner Zhu (Chn, 3) lt to Anna Muzychuk (Ukr, 4).

Pegula battles into semifinal

WASHINGTON, AFP: Top seed Jessica Pegula once again fought back from a set down to reach the WTA Charleston Open semifinals with a 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 win against Russia's Diana Shnaider on Friday.

Jessica Pegula

Defending champion Pegula has lost the first set in all three matches so far, but again dug deep to maintain her hopes of retaining the title.

Pegula will face fourth-seeded fellow American Iva Jovic, who beat Russian Anna Kalinskaya 6-3, 6-4.

On the other side of the draw, fifth-seeded American Madison Keys booked her semifinal spot with a 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 victory over third-seeded Swiss Belinda Bencic.

Tirante wins

Thiago Tirante, ranked 83rd in the world, stunned top-seeded Ben Shelton 7-6 (7/5), 3-6, 6-4 on Friday to book a semifinal showdown with friend and fellow Argentine Roman Burruchaga at the ATP clay court tournament in Houston.

FOOTBALL FA CUP

Haaland 'trick sinks Liverpool

Man City storm into semifinals with a 4-0 win as Salah misses penalty for the Reds

LONDON, AFP

Erling Haaland hit a hat-trick as Manchester City thrashed Liverpool 4-0 on Saturday to reach the FA Cup semifinals and increase the pressure on Reds boss Arne Slot.

Haaland netted twice late in the first half of the quarterfinal at the Etihad Stadium and completed his treble after the interval following an Antoine Semenyo strike.

With Liverpool trailing by four, Mohamed Salah had a penalty saved by City goalkeeper James Trafford to compound a miserable afternoon for the under-fire Slot.

Liverpool's tame surrender was a bitter blow to Slot, who had to endure chants of "you're getting sacked in the morning" from gloating City fans.

They head to Paris Saint-Germain for the Champions League quarterfinal first leg on Wednesday with Slot desperately needing a victory over the holders to keep the critics at bay.

Liverpool, who have just two wins in their last seven matches in all competitions, are fifth in the Premier League and far from certain to qualify for next season's Champions League.

It is a remarkable decline for Slot, who just 12 months ago was on the brink of leading Liverpool to their record-equalling 20th English title.

Manchester City striker Erling Haaland (right) celebrates with team-mates after scoring their second goal during their FA Cup quarterfinal against Liverpool at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester on Saturday. AFP

City's ruthless performance took them into the FA Cup semifinals for an eighth successive season.

After beating Liverpool twice in the Premier League this term, City have enjoyed three successive victories over the Reds for the first time since 1937.

City have also won 18 consecutive home FA Cup matches, setting a new record in the competition.

Guardiola's men have found a rich vein of form at just the right time to salvage their season.

Trailing Premier League leaders Arsenal by nine points and knocked out of the Champions League by Real Madrid, City bounced back to beat the Gunners 2-0 in the League Cup final just before the international break.

Now they can set their sights on winning the FA Cup for the first time since 2023 while retaining an outside chance of catching Arsenal in the title race.

Fresh from scoring twice in the League Cup final, Nico O'Reilly was key to City's 39th-minute opener.

Matheus Nunes picked out O'Reilly in the Liverpool area and as he twisted away from Virgil van Dijk, the defender's clumsy trip conceded a penalty that Haaland converted in clinical fashion.

Haaland had scored just once in his previous six games in all competitions.

But the prolific Norway striker is never far from a hot streak and he doubled City's advantage on the stroke of half-time.

Rayan Cherki found Semenyo's run and he lofted a pinpoint cross towards Haaland, who made a perfectly-timed run in front of Ibrahima Konate to glance a superb header past Giorgi Mamardashvili.

Liverpool were in disarray and Semenyo landed the knockout blow five minutes after the interval. Cherki's pass sent Semenyo sprinting in behind the flat-footed Van Dijk to clip a deft finish over Mamardashvili.

Haaland completed the 28th treble of his career in the 57th minute, drilling home via the underside of the bar after O'Reilly teed him up 12 yards from goal.

On a prolonged farewell tour after announcing he will leave Liverpool at the end of the season, Salah produced the latest in a long line of lacklustre performances.

The Egyptian's struggles were encapsulated by his second-half penalty miss after Nunes fouled Ekitike.

La Liga: Nteka finds target as Vallecano return to winning ways with win over 10-man Elche

MADRID, AP: Rayo Vallecano left it late to beat 10-man Elche 1-0 and record its first La Liga win for almost a month on Friday.

The Madrid-based club had not picked up three points since beating bottom side Oviedo on March 4 but returned to winning ways thanks to a second-half goal from Randy Nteka.

It was helped by the dismissal of Elche's Pedro Bigas six minutes before halftime.

The veteran center half was booked midway through the first half and picked up a second yellow for a high challenge and was shown a red card.

Pedro Díaz hit the post in the second half and Elche goalkeeper Matías Dituro made smart saves but Nteka got on the end of a nice cross from Alvaro García with 16 minutes remaining to give the home side the win. It was the Angola international's first goal of the season and a vital one for Rayo.

Northern Waves wins Brave Dancer Plate

HYDERABAD RESULTS

Northern Waves, trained by G Shashikanth and ridden by Ajay Kumar, won the Brave Dancer Plate, the feature event of the races on Saturday.

1. The Cyndy Plate - 1800M: Yuvraj (K Mukesh Kumar) 1, Golden Aura (B Nikhil) 2, Photograph (G Naresh) 3, Beech Wood (Kuldeep Singh Jr) 4. WB: 4-3/4, 5-3/4, 3. T: 1:55.86. TB: D Netto; Fav: Yuvraj.

2. The Galactica Plate - 1200M: Arthisha (K Mukesh Kumar) 1, Analysis (G Naresh) 2, Cypress (P Trevor) 3, Farsiris (P Sai Kumar) 4. Not Run: Nkalanzinzi. WB: Nk, 1-1/2, 2; T: 1:14.15. TB: Magan Singh; Fav: Cypress.

3. The Grace Hanover Plate (Div I) - 1200M: Miss Smiley Angel (A Asbar) 1, N R I Triple Power (K Mukesh Kumar) 2, Sharanga (P Trevor) 3, Petra Act (Dhanu Singh) 4. WB: Shd, 3-1/2, 2-1/4. T: 1:12.25. TB: G Shashikanth; Fav: N R I Triple Power.

4. The Solitaire Plate - 1400M: Catch if You Can K (Mukesh Kumar) 1, Bholi Punjaban (Mohit Singh) 2, Clefairy (P Trevor) 3, Rival (Ajay Kumar) 4. WB: 1-1/4, Hd, Nk. T: 1:26.70. TB: Magan Singh; Fav: N R I Range.

5. The Windscale Plate - 1600M: Garfunkle (P Trevor) 1, Toshiro (K Mukesh Kumar) 2, Northern Sky (A Asbar) 3, Excalibur (P Ajeet Kumar) 4. WB: 3-1/2, 2-3/4, 1-1/2. T: 1:38.84. TB: Bharath Singh; Fav: Toshiro.

6. The Brave Dancer Plate - 1200M: Northern Waves (Ajay Kumar) 1, One N Only (K Mukesh Kumar) 2, Diablo (A Asbar) 3, Lashka (P Ajeet Kumar) 4. WB: 4-1/4, Nk, 2-1/2. T: 1:11.05. TB: G Shashikanth. Fav: Northern Waves.

7. The Grace Hanover Plate (Div II) - 1200M: Greif (Neeraj Rawal) 1, Ayushman (K Mukesh Kumar) 2, Home Run (Kuldeep Singh) 3, Crimson Flame (Mohit Singh) 4. Not Run: Emerald Touch and Normui. WB: 2-1/4, 3, 3/4. T: 1:12.49. TB: KSV Prasad Raju; Fav: Ayushman.

8. The Next Move Plate - 1200M: American Affair (P Ajeet Kumar) 1, Deccan Ranger (K Mukesh Kumar) 2, Live Legend (Ajay Kumar) 3, Don Cherie (Ekram Alam) 4. WB: 1-1/4, Shd, 1-1/4. T: 1:15.02. TB: A Vatsalya. Fav: Deccan Ranger.

Bengaluru Dividends

I race: Rs. 18 w; 11, 12, 18 p; Shp: Rs 32; Thp: Rs 41; Fc: Rs 70; Q: Rs 50; Tri: Rs 492 & 302; Exp: Rs 1493 & 398.

II race: Rs. 24 w; 12, 14, 11 p; Shp: Rs 33; Thp: Rs 52; Fc: Rs 133; Q: Rs 59; Tri: Rs 121 & 37; Exp: Rs 6015 & 4511.

III race: Rs. 206 w; 38, 13, 15 p; Shp: Rs 28; Thp: Rs 47; Fc: Rs 541; Q: Rs 114; Tri: Rs 589 & 286; Exp: Rs 5942 & 3820.

IV race: Rs. 126 w; 44, 35, 16 p; Shp: Rs 130; Thp: Rs 45; Fc: Rs 2935; Q: Rs 3004; Tri: Rs C/F; Exp: Rs C/F.

V race: Rs 42 w; 19, 10, 13 p; Shp: Rs 36; Thp: Rs 37; Fc: Rs 175; Q: Rs 60; Tri: Rs 172 & 117; Exp: Rs 954 & 458.

VI race: Rs.17 w; 20, 17, 19 p; Shp: Rs 31; Thp: Rs 38; Fc: Rs 34; Q: Rs 34; Tri: Rs 136 & 79; Exp: Rs 1581 & 840.

VII race: Rs.24 w; 13, 12, 13p; Shp: Rs 31; Thp: Rs 40; Fc: Rs 54; Q: Rs 24; Tri: Rs 85 & 45; Exp: Rs 504 & 386.

VIII race: Rs.55 w; 30, 12, 14 p; Shp: Rs 37; Thp: Rs 44; Fc: Rs 108; Q: Rs 60; Tri: Rs 229 & 146; Exp: Rs 7043 & 3237.

Jackpot: Rs 64,355 & 2805. **I treble:** Rs 1307. **II treble:** Rs 47,837. **III treble:** Rs 198.

Racing Ruler for feature

HYDERABAD SELECTIONS

KSV Prasad Raju-trained Racing Ruler, to be ridden by Neeraj Rawal, is favoured to win the Kamareddy Plate the feature event to be run over a distance of 1400 meters at the races on Sunday. The first race starts at 2.55 pm.

1. The Circar Plate - 1100M: Ek 1, Midnight Beauty 2, Golden Unicorn 3.

2. The Kinnerasani Plate (Div I) - 1100M: Cosmic Gift 1, Modin 2, Vyom 3.

3. The Kinnerasani Plate (Div II) - 1100M: Vinfast 1, Quattros 2, NRI Mega Power 3.

4. The Rock Heaven Plate - 1400M: Feel The Magic 1, Aquatone 2, American Gangster 3.

5. The Recommender Plate - 1400M: Special Star 1, Mystical Dawn 2, Chin Town 3.

6. The Kamareddy Plate - 1400M: Racing Ruler 1, Certainty 2, Exclusive Black 3.

7. The Aristocrat Plate - 1200M: Natu Natu 1, Lego 2, Linda 3.

8: The Kuntala Plate - 1400M: Deccan Ranger 1, Bold Indian 2, Hoping High 3.

Day's best: Special Star. **Jackpot:** 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. **I treble:** 1, 2, 3. **II treble:** 3, 4, 5. **III treble:** 6, 7, 8.

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
MANGALURU DIVISION MANGALURU
Ref :PWD:MD:TND:(66E/46E): 2025-26:JE-1 Dated: 02.04.2026
SHORTERM TENDER NOTIFICATION /
(Karnataka Public E-Procurement Portal) /3rd Call
The Executive Engineer, PWD, Divn. Mangaluru inviting tender for 3rd Call under K.P.P Portal www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in from eligible tenderers in accordance with KTTP Act Indent No: 32069 under the Head Of Account: CMIDP. **The Last date for reciept of tender: 10.04.2026 upto 16.00 Hours.** The above work cost of estimate is Rs.100.00Lakhs.
Tenders for the above works are invited as per the Standard Tender Document KW-3. Further details such as value of work, amount put to tender, EMD etc., can be accessed on the KPP Portal at **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** Further, for more details can contact O/o, Case Worker, Executive Engineer's Office, PWD, Mangaluru Division, Mangaluru during official working hours. Contact No: 0824-2423169.
DIPR/DK/KSMCA/16/25-26 dt.02.04.2026 **Sd/- Executive Engineer**

KARNATAKA HOUSING BOARD
3rd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009.
Tender Notification
(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only)
Karnataka Housing Board invite tender through Karnataka public procurement portal for below mentioned work.
Development of additional 10 sites (5 MIG + 5 LIG) and services at Renebennur & Magodu Village, Renebennur Taluk, Haveri District. **WORK INDENT No.** KHB/2025-26/OW/Work_Indert No.712 & IFT No.: 2/2026-27 Date: 02.04.2026. **Amount put to tender:** Rs. 39,22,044/-.
Last date for submission of bid: 16.04.2026 up to 4 PM
For further information, contact below mentioned office address: Executive Engineer, Karnataka Housing Board, Cauvery Bhavan, Bengaluru. Telephone No: 080-22273511/080-22100077, Website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**
DIPR/CP/68/AKAR/2026-27 **Sd/- Executive Engineer, Karnataka Housing Board, Bengaluru**

NANDI MEDICAL COLLEGE AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE
E-mail:cimschikkaballapura@gmail.com,
Phone & Fax:08156-272388
No:NMC&RI/CKB/E-TENDER/01/2026-27 Date:01.04.2026
-:TENDER NOTIFICATION:-
Nandi Medical College & Research Institution (District Hospital Campus) Chikkaballapura invites tenders from the eligible tenderers through the E-Tenders for the following subjects. **(1)** STP/WTP AMC (College) **(2)** AC AMC Call-2 **(3)** CCTV, Computer, Printer AMC Call-2 **(4)** STP AMC (District Hospital) **(5)** Printing **(6)** Stationary & Cartridge Refilling for Various Printers **(7)** Medical Kits/SCSP/TSP **(8)** Tabs **(9)** Diet **(10)** Staff Nurse-50 **(11)** Service Contract-40 **(12)** Technicians-27 **(13)** Purchase of Batteries for UPS **(14)** Solar High Mask Lamp for Teaching Hospital For further information about tender the details please log on to: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in Note:** For any further information and announcements regarding this tender please keep on watching our **website i.e., https://cimschikkaballapura.karnataka.gov.in**
Sd/- DIRECTOR, NMC&RI, CHIKKABALLAPURA
DIPR/CHIKKABALLAPURA/RO:01/KSMCA/2026-27

مولانا آزاد نیشنل اُردو یونیورسٹی
MAULANA AZAD NATIONAL URDU UNIVERSITY
(A Central University under Ministry of Education, GoI)
Gachibowli, Hyderabad-500032, Telangana State
ADMISSION NOTIFICATION: 2026-27
Online applications are invited for admission to regular mode Ph.D., Post-Graduate, B.Tech, B.Ed., B.A. LL.B (Hons.), LL.B, and PG Diploma/Advanced Diploma/Diploma/Certificate Programmes offered by the University at its Hyderabad Main Campus and Satellite Campuses, Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and Polytechnics for the Academic year 2026-27.
Last date for submission of Online Applications
27.04.2026 Admissions through Entrance Test
- **Ph.D. Programmes:** Urdu, Arabic, English, Hindi, Persian, Translation Studies; Women Studies, Public Administration, Political Science, Social Work, Islamic Studies, History, Economics, Sociology, Deccan Studies, Education, Journalism & Mass Communication, Management, Commerce, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Medical Laboratory Technology (MLT),Computer Science, Urdu Culture Studies, Comparative Literature, Law, Social Inclusion, Language Teaching in Madrasa.
- **PG Programmes:** MBA, MCA, M.Tech. (Computer Science), M.Ed., Master of Law (LLM), M.A. Education.
- **UG Programmes:** B.Tech.(Computer Science), B.Tech. CS (Lateral Entry), B.Tech. Civil Engineering under (Self-Finance) Regular Mode, LL.B, B.A. LL.B (Hons.), B.Ed., B.Tech. Computer Science & Engineering, B. Tech. Electronics & Communication Engineering, B.Tech. Information Technology, B.Tech. Civil Engineering.
- **Professional Diplomas:** Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed.), Polytechnic-Diploma in Engineering-Civil, Computer Science, Electronics & Communication, Mechanical, Electrical & Electronics, Automobile and Apparel Technologies and Polytechnic-Diploma in Engineering Lateral Entry.

10.06.2026 Admissions through Merit Based
- **Post Graduate Programmes:** M.A in Urdu, English, Hindi, Arabic, Persian, Translation Studies, Women Studies, Public Administration, Political Science, Islamic Studies, History, Economics, Sociology, MSW(Social Work), Journalism and Mass Communication, M.A JMC (Lateral Entry); M.Com, M.Sc.(Mathematics), M.Sc.(Physics), M.Sc.(Chemistry), M.Sc.(Botany), M.Sc.(Zoology), M.Sc. (Industrial Chemistry), M.Sc. (Bioinformatics) and PG Diploma in Teaching English (PGDTE) Full-time, M.A. Film Making (Self Finance mode)
- **PG Diploma Programmes (Part-time):** Functional Urdu, Hindi and Translation, Professional Arabic, Translation, PG Diploma in Alternative Dispute Resolution and PG Diploma in Cyber Law and Digital Governance.
- **Diploma Programmes (Part-time):** Urdu, Arabic, Persian, Pashto, French, Russian, Islamic Studies, Telugu, Turkish, Calligraphy, Tahseen-E-Ghazal, Advanced Diploma in Pashto, Advanced Diploma in French & Advanced Diploma in Telugu.
- **Certificate Programmes (Part-time):** Proficiency in Arabic, Persian, Pashto, French, Russian, Telugu, Kashmiri, Turkish & Urdu.
- **Certificate program in Fashion Technology:** Hyderabad, Kadapa, Varanasi& Urdu Hall Himayatnagar Hyd.
- **Diploma and Undergraduate Programmes in Fashion Technology:** Hyderabad, Kadapa and Varanasi
- **Diploma and Undergraduate Programmes in Interior Design:** Hyderabad Kadapa and Varanasi
- **Certificate Course in Jewellery Design:** Hyderabad

Note: The applicants must have passed Urdu as a subject/language or as medium in 10th/12th/Graduation level or equivalent Madrasa Courses with Urdu as medium of Instruction approved by MANUU. All programmes are offered in Urdu medium except language courses.
Admissions for all programmes are offered at MANUU Campus, Hyderabad, unless otherwise mentioned.
1. **Lucknow Campus:** M.A in Urdu, English, Arabic, Hindi & Persian and Ph.D.in English, Urdu, Arabic & Persian.
2. **Srinagar (Budgam) Campus:** M.A in Economics, Islamic Studies, Women Studies, Urdu, Persian, Arabic & English; Ph.D. in Urdu, English, Islamic Studies, Economics & Persian.
3. **Colleges of Teacher Education at Bhopal (MP):** B.Ed., M.Ed., and PhD in Education.
4. **Colleges of Teacher Education at Darbhanga (Bihar):** B.Ed., M.Ed., LLM and PhD in Education.
5. **Colleges of Teacher Education at Srinagar (J&K) and Varanasi Campus (UP) :** M.A. Education
6. **Asansol (WB), Sambhal (UP), Nuh (Haryana), Bidar (KS) and Sambhaji Nagar (Aurangabad, MS):** B.Ed.
7. **Diploma in Engineering Programmes:** Diploma in Civil Engineering, Diploma in Computer Science& Engineering, Diploma in Electronics & Communication Engineering (at Darbhanga, Bihar and Bengaluru, Karnataka); Diploma in Civil Engineering, Diploma in Mechanical Engineering, Diploma in Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Diploma in Apparel Technologies (at Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh); Diploma in Civil Engineering, Diploma in Mechanical Engineering, Diploma in Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Diploma in Automobile Engineering(at Cuttack, Odisha).

Applications are accepted online only. The e-prospectus and online application forms shall be available on the University website **https://manuu.edu.in/Regular-Admissions** till the last date of submission. For further details or any clarifications, please email to **admissionsregular@manuu.edu.in** for general queries contact admission help desk: 040- 23006612 EXTN- 1801
Reservation for SC/ST/OBC/PwD/EWS candidates for admission into various programmes will be as per the Government of India norms. Limited hostel accommodation is available.
Note: Admissions into 4YUG & ITEP Programmes offered by MANUU is through Common University Entrance Test (CUET-2026) and National Common Entrance Test (NCET-2026) to be conducted by National Testing Agency.
05th April, 2026 **www.manuu.edu.in** **Registrar, MANUU**

Vishvanath Suresh scored a massive upset when he beat reigning World champion Sanzhar Tashkenbay.

Suresh stuns world champion Tashkenbay to enter last four

ULAANBAATAR (MONGOLIA), PTI: India's rising pugilist Vishvanath Suresh stunned reigning world champion and World No. 1 Sanzhar Tashkenbay of Kazakhstan to advance to the men's 50kg class semifinals of the Asian Boxing Championships here on Saturday.

Before his upset win, Suresh had defeated Bekzat Ergeshov of Kyrgyzstan 5-0 in a unanimous decision from the judges.

Suresh, who trains at the Army Sports Institute, has rapidly established himself as one of India's most exciting boxing prospects, seamlessly transitioning from a dominant youth career to the elite senior level.

Hailing from Chennai, his rise marks a significant moment for boxing talent emerging from the region. He is the reigning national champion, having clinched gold at the Elite Men's National Boxing Championships 2026.

Technically sharp and tactically astute, Suresh is known for his speed, agility, and ring intelligence. His ability to control distance, combined with quick, precise combinations, makes him a formidable presence in the fast-paced flyweight category.

Shyam secures bronze medal

BANGKOK, PTI: Shyam Sunder Swami secured a bronze medal for India after edging past senior teammate and Paris Paralympic bronze medalist Rakesh Kumar in a closely-fought play-off at the World Archery Para Series here.

Swami prevailed 143 (10*) to 143 (9) in the bronze medal match of the compound men's individual event, with the contest being decided on a tie-break.

AFI approval must for sponsors

NEW DELHI, PTI

In an important policy decision, the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) has made it mandatory for the track and field athletes to get its prior approval before entering into agreements with sponsors, including private entities.

The AFI said the decision has been taken in view of the increasing instances of athletes and coaches frequently changing sponsors.

"... keeping in mind the best interests of athletes and sponsors, AFI has made it mandatory for athletes to obtain prior approval from the Athletics Federation of India before entering into any agreement or contractual arrangement with any sponsor or third party," a circular from the national federation said.

"This requirement has been introduced in view of the increasing instances of athletes and coaches frequently changing sponsors. The objective is to safeguard the interests of both athletes and sponsors."

The AFI asked all the presidents and secretaries of affiliated units, as well as coaches, to ensure that the directive is effectively communicated to all concerned athletes.

"Sponsors are also advised to proceed with the execution of any agreement only after confirming with AFI that the athlete has obtained the requisite approval. AFI will send the confirmation within 3 days from the date of the request," said the circular issued by officiating Secretary G Srinibas Patnaik.

DRAWING GENDER LINE IOC's decision to reintroduce gender testing for the LA 2028 has sharply divided opinions

XX-XY divide: Eligibility vs Identity

HITA PRAKASH, ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

Once again, the female body and its functioning have made headlines. This time, the very definition of 'a woman' is being laid bare in the context of sport.

Before getting to the core of it all, it would be preferable to keep aside emotions and personal choices as we focus here on understanding the latest policy announced by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on the 'Protection of Female (Women's) Category in Olympic Sport' and then weighing in some concerns by experts.

The new IOC president, Kirsty Coventry, and Dr Jane Thornton, medical and scientific director of IOC, through a press conference released a 10-page document on March 26 that cites 'for all disciplines on the sports programme of an IOC event, including individual and team sports, eligibility for any female category is limited to biological females.'

This effectively closes the door on individuals with certain types of Differences in Sex Development (DSD), apart from trans women, from competing in the female category on the grounds of a perceived male advantage.

A few key points: the IOC policy will be applied for the first time at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games and is not retroactive. It will also require elite female athletes to undergo a one-time sex-determination test focusing on the SRY (Sex-determining Region Y) gene. The IOC considers this marker to be fixed throughout life and to provide highly accurate evidence that an athlete has experienced, or will experience, male sex development.

The basics: Female: XX chromosome; Male: XY chromosome.

The process: All female athletes will have to undergo an unintrusive SRY Gene screening by submitting their saliva, cheek swab or blood samples. If the result is negative then the individual is cleared to compete in the female category. However, the scenario gets complicated in case of a positive result which points to the presence of a male Y chromosome in a female-assigned body contradicting the defined XX combination.

This isn't the end of the road just yet. The screening result, if positive, then leads to further evaluation, subjected to the individual's approval, to determine the complications. If the athlete is then diagnosed of Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS) - a condition that affects sexual development before birth and during puberty where affected individuals may have external sex characteristics that are typical for females or have features of both male and female sexual development - what type of AIS then becomes critical.

AIS has three forms: CAIS - complete androgen insensitivity syndrome; PAIS - partial androgen insensitivity syndrome and MAIS - mild androgen insensitivity syndrome.

The IOC policy states: 'Those athletes with a diagnosis of CAIS or other rare DSDs that do not benefit from the anabolic and/or performance-enhancing effects of testosterone will be allowed to compete in the female category.' But those with PAIS or MAIS, where the body's tissues are partially/mildly sensitive to the effects of androgens, are barred.

TO BE NOTED

Female: XX	Male: XY
AIS: Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome	**Trans woman:** Person registered male at birth but live and identify as a woman.
CAIS: Complete Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome	**DSD:** Differences in Sex Development
PAIS: Partial Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome	
Hyperandrogenism: Excessive high levels of male sex hormores most commonly affecting women of reproductive age.	

The third condition under DSD mentioned by the IOC is the 5-alpha reductase deficiency (5-ARD) - a rare genetic disorder where the body of XY chromosome individuals cannot efficiently convert testosterone to dihydrotestosterone (DHT) resulting in ambiguous or predominantly female appearing external genitalia at birth leading to female gender assignment despite having male testes. South African athlete Caster Semenya is said to have this condition. Such persons will also not be able to participate in the female section.

Finally, the transgender women -- persons registered male at birth but live and identify as a woman -- are also banned with IOC president Coventry stressing: "It would not be fair for biological males to compete in the female category."

Considering multiple scientific studies, IOC argues that despite suppressing testosterone levels, nuances such as a larger heart, higher lung capacity, more red blood cells and stronger ligaments for being born a male gives an upper hand when such individuals grow up to identify themselves as trans women.

Is the process fool proof? Given the complexities of a human body, especially that of a female, the medical experts, though credit the detailing, remain cautious.

"The good thing is that they are specifying it to be screening that will later lead to testing," says Dr Priya Ranganath, consultant clinical geneticist at the Apollo Hospital in Bengaluru.

"But biology doesn't work in such simple binaries. Sex development isn't controlled by a single gene. It's a complex interplay of multiple genes, hormones and how the body responds to those hormones. So while SRY might start the process, it doesn't determine the final outcome," adds Dr Priya.

Dr Nivedita Jha, obstetrician and gynecologist at Sparsh Hospital in Bengaluru, echoes similar concerns saying: "The entire embryology of internal and external genitalia and their advantages, disadvantages in sporting performance is a very complex process.

"I'm more interested if those responsible for testing will be counselling the athletes beforehand. Because before we do karyotyping, we do genetic counselling. For example, if somebody comes to the clinic expressing that they have never had periods (which is the case with AIS & 5-ARD) and we are suspecting that it may be a situation where they are XY but we know typically they are female, you should have a proper mental health team."

The IOC's 10-page policy document has listed ways to go about the sensitive issue under athlete-centred approach, right to privacy and confidentiality and implementation workshops and knowledge sharing.

The proper procedure to be followed by International Federations, National Olympic Committees, National Federations and Continental Associations is all on paper. The trickiest bit, however, is the interpretation of the 'doing it the right way' during implementation. At least in India, with a few examples of DSD-related athletes from sprinter Dutee Chand to middle-distance runners Santhi Soundarajan and Pinki Pramanik, the handling of their cases have shown laxity.

"I had no idea about hyperandrogenism until I was directed to undergo testing in 2014. After the test, I was told I have a higher testosterone level than a female and that makes me a DSD athlete," Dutee tells DHOS.

"While I had no control over this development, I was called a man, a cheat, and barred from competing. I subsequently lost my job and respect in society too. I had to fight for my place in an international court (CAS) to earn my rights to compete again only to see that it was all for nothing, as we are again regarded as different when I know I was born a female."

In 2014, Dutee was tested by the Athletics Federation of India and Sports Authority of India after an anonymous complaint, and was found to have naturally high testosterone due to hyperandrogenism. She was barred from the Commonwealth and Asian Games as her testosterone levels exceeded the then limit of 10 nmol/L.

Dutee refused medical intervention and challenged the rule at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in 2015. CAS suspended the regulations, allowing her to compete again. She went on to set national records, competed at the Rio Olympics.

On the other hand, a biological female Indian sportsperson, who once filed a complaint against an alleged DSD athlete, tells DHOS on condition of anonymity: "It does feel unfair. Unlike doping, where you often cannot figure out if the athlete is cheating or not, it's too apparent to us that a rival has an unfair advantage.

"And I can tell you that most of us, if not all of us, feel hard done. And when you try to complain, you are discouraged by the officials and such athletes are protected. It is further discouraging when you see them break records and they are holding it to this day even after going off the circuit. To be honest, we don't see any difference in doping and such an advantage held by DSD athletes."

For all those advocating for the female category to be exclusive to biological females, the new IOC policy feels like a victory. For females with DSD condition and trans women it is a fight for inclusion in the female category.

The majority of experts on the subject agree that defining biological sex entirely by chromosomes is overly simplistic. The consensus is that more research is needed to conclusively arrive at a conclusion that athletes' complex biological conditions enjoyed an unfair advantage.

IOC, on the other hand, feels precaution under uncertainty is the best option available to it.

Fair? Unfair? Exclusive? Inclusive? Where and how does one draw the line?

The debate will continue...

Caster Semenya

Dutee Chand

Laurel Hubbard

Imane Khelif

Sunil Chhetri

Chhetri, Bhutia strikes put BFC level on top

BENGALURU, DHNS: A goal at the start and at the end sealed Bengaluru FC's third away victory on the trot with Sunil Chhetri and Namgyal Bhutia getting on the scoresheet in a 2-0 victory over FC Goa in Margao on Saturday.

The result moved Bengaluru FC to fourth and level on top as four teams -- including leaders Mumbai City FC (leading by goal difference), Mohun Bagan and Jamshedpur FC -- on 14 points with the later two playing a 1-1 draw earlier in the day at the JRD Tata Sports Complex Stadium

Bengaluru FC did not require long to open their account in this game, as a failed Ashique through ball fell kindly for Sunil Chhetri at the top of the box, who buried it past FC Goa's Tiwari towards the bottom corner in the 3rd minute.

Ashique came close in the 24th minute, after Braian intercepted a pass in his own half to release Ashique down the left flank, who cut back inside before firing his shot wide of the post.

Bengaluru FC defended as a unit in the 36th minute as FC Goa hit the post from a corner, and the BFC defenders handled the situation with two blocks to keep the Gaurs at bay.

ATHLETICS INDIAN SERIES 1

Sreeshankar, Ancy, Shaili leap big

Local athletes Akanksha, Pallavi, Krishik claim three top spots

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

The long jump events lived up to their billing as Murali Sreeshankar, Ancy Sojan and Shaili Singh dominated the men's and women's events of the Indian Athletics Series 1 respectively at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here on Saturday.

Sreeshankar, who won silver and the last Asian and Commonwealth Games, kicked off his crucial 2026 season in style with a series of 8.03 metres, 7.99, 8.13, 8.15, 8.12, 8.10 in a newfound consistency in his performances since his return from a career-threatening knee surgery. In-form Karnataka man Purushotham, meanwhile, replicated his personal best from last month as he leapt to 7.87 for a third-place finish behind Bihar's Sunny Kumar (7.90), who trains with Sreeshankar in Thiruvananthapuram.

"I am happy that I was able to start my season well with so many 8-plus jumps," the 27-year-old told *DH*. "I, in fact, was aiming for an 8.40-plus jump, but it didn't happen. However, all this won't matter if I don't find them at the big-ticket events, something that I am often criticised for."

Meanwhile, Ancy, who won the Asian Indoors bronze last February, put up a similar show earlier in the women's final in front of a competitive field stacked with names like Shaili, Moumita Mondal and Mubassina Mohammed.

The 25-year-old Asian Games silver medallist looks eager to upgrade the silver she won at the last Asian Games as she jumped an impressive sequence of 6.54, 6.48, 6.47, 6.48, 6.50, X (foul) to take the top spot.

Meanwhile, Shaili kicked off her season in style as she placed herself second with a 6.52 attempt but ended up fouling the next four. Her third fouled attempt left many ruining a missed opportunity as she evidently jumped beyond 6.60 while marginally overstepping the take-off board.

Moumita and Mubassina, meanwhile, fought for the third spot with the former taking the third by a mere centimetre at 6.37m.

Elsewhere, local athletes bagged three top spots in the senior categories with 100m hurdler Krishik M (representing Reliance), shot putter Akanksha Kenja, and high jumper Pallavi Patil made the most of the depleted fields in their respective events.

Results: Winners and Karnataka: Men: 100m: Shandosh P (TN) 10.45s. 110m hurdles: Krishik M (Rel) 13.87. **200m:** Jishnu Prasad PK (BSF) 20.76. **800m:** Anu Kumar (Utt) 1:48.21. **400m H:** Arjun Pradeep (Rai) 51.04. **5000m:** Harmanjot Singh (JSW) 14:21.07. **Long jump:** Sreeshankar (NCOT) 8.15m, 1; Purshotham (Kar) 7.87, 3. **Javelin throw:** Bibin Antony (Ker) 77.53. **Shot put:** Samardeep Singh Gill (MP) 19.74. **High jump:** Sarvesh Kushare (Mah) 2.23, 1; Jesse Sandesh (Kar) 2.10, 3. **Discus throw:** Bhartpreet Singh (Rel) 55.86, 1; Mohammed Saqlain (Kar) 53.96, 3. **Shot put:** Vaidik Tiwari (MP) 16.70. **Women: 100m:** Giridharini Ravikumar (TN) 11.53s. **100m hurdles:** Anjali C (JSW) 13.44. **200m:** Rashdeep Kaur (JSW) 24.09. **400m H:** R Vithya Ramraj (Rai) 57.10. **800m:** Kavitha V (TN) 2:07.57. **5000m:** Prachi Devkar (Mah) 17:14.12. **Long jump:** Ancy Sojan (Rel) 6.54m. **Javelin throw:** Karishma Sanil (Rel) 50.24. **Shot put:** Akanksha Kenja (Kar) 11.89, 1; Madhurya (Kar) 11.11, 2; Mayuri Arade (Kar) 10.36. **Discus throw:** Bhavana Yadav (Del) 52.51. **High jump:** Pallavi Patil (Kar), 1; Bhumika KN (Kar) 12.74, Pooja (Har). **Pole vault:** Baranica Elangovan (TN) 4.10.

Murali Sreeshankar in action during the men's long jump event of the Indian Athletics series 1 at Sree Kanteerava stadium in Bengaluru on Saturday. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

Kochhar slips but stays in top 5

CHIBA (JAPAN), PTI: Indian golfer Karandeep Kochhar returned a card of 73 in the third round to slip Tied-4th at the International Series Japan, here Saturday.

Kochhar after bogey free rounds on the first two days (67-65) had five bogeys on a windy third day though his three birdies lessened the blow. With 73 he is now 8-under and Tied-4th after being Tied-second at the halfway stage.

Korea's Hongtaek Kim kept the lead for the third straight day that saw Shugo Imahira from Japan join him in front.

The other Indian in the field Jeev Milkha Singh struggled to 7-over 78 and was now 6-over at Tied-71st.

Aditi Ashok was the top placed Indian golfer after the second round even as Pranavi Urs and Avani Prashanth also made the cut at the Aramco Championship in Las Vegas.

DYES Vidyanagar, MNK Rao lift titles

BENGALURU, DHNS

DYES Vidyanagar and MNK Rao Park BC emerged as champions in the State Junior Boys and Girls Championships for the DN Rajanna Trophy at Sree Kanteerava Stadium basketball courts here on Saturday.

The boys' knockout final saw MNK Rao Park BC clinch the title against Beagles BC, winning 80-68 in extra time after a 64-64 draw in regular time.

In the girls' round-robin final, DYES narrowly defeated Blore-Vanguardas 77-74. Winners received Rs 30,000 while the runners-up Rs 20,000, and third-place teams received Rs 10,000 each.

Results: Final: Boys: MNK Rao Park BC: 80 (Aaksha 24 points, Yashas 18) bt Beagles BC: 68 (Dev Charan 27); HT: 27-25. **Girls:** DYES Vidyanagar: 77 (Ishitha Gowda 24, Sheethal 12, Nireeksha 12) bt Blore-Vanguardas: 74 (Mahek Sharma 27, Aditi Subramanya 24); HT: 43-31.

MNK Rao Park BC, winners of the State Sub-junior boys' basketball championship for the DN Rajanna Trophy in Bengaluru on Saturday. STANDING (from left): Anish, Ujwal, Raj, Vasisht, Chiranjeevi, Ravi Kumar, Vijayeendra, Akash, Yashas, Prabir. KNEELING: Harish, Gowri, Lalit, Gagan, Kishor and Harsha..
DH PHOTO/ B K JANARDHAN

Pankaj Advani (left) and Chitra M with their spoils.

Double delight for Advani, Chitra at pool Nationals

BENGALURU, DHNS: Green baize baron Pankaj Advani played the big points well under pressure to edge out a fighting Pushpender Singh for a memorable double in his maiden pool Nationals at the Rotary Bhawan in Ludhiana, Punjab on Saturday.

In the men's final of the 10-ball pool event, where fortunes fluctuated like a pendulum, PSPB's Advani had to score a come-from-behind 11-9 win over his RSPB rival.

A little later at the adjacent table, fellow Bengalurean Chitra Magimairaj rallied splendidly to overcome Neena Praveen of Tamil Nadu 6-4 in the women's final to complete an impressive double.

The men's final was a match of small margins. Although Pushpender got off the blocks in a rousing manner, Advani, who annexed the 9-ball title a few days ago, fought back in splendid fashion to draw level at 3-3 in the race-to-11 affair.

Results (10-ball pool): Men: Final: Pankaj Advani (PSPB) bt Pushpender Singh (RSPB) 11-9.
Third-place playoff: Shahbaaz Adil Khan (PSPB) bt Aayush Kumar (Pun) 5-4.
Women: Final: Chitra Magimairaj (Kar) bt Neena Praveen (TN) 6-4.
Third-place playoff: Natasha Chethan (Kar) bt Anupama Ramachandran (TN) 4-3.

10 TEAMS 13 VENUES 58 DAYS 74 MATCHES

"As a unit, we always focus on one game at a time rather than thinking about the records. We are just trying to be in the present and plan our strengths and weaknesses.

JITESH SHARMA, RCB VC

IN BRIEF

Ex-state hockey player no more

▸ Former state hockey player T Cladius passed away on Saturday after a prolonged illness, reports DHNS.

He was 58.

From turning out for Primrose Hockey Club during his early days as a player, he went on to play for Karnataka in the junior national hockey championships and many other All India tournaments for the senior team. He also played for AGORC's team for about 15 years.

Karnataka suffer defeat

▸ In a division B men's match, Chhattisgarh handed a 4-1 defeat to Karnataka on the fourth day of the 16th Hockey India Sub Junior Men National Championship in Rajgir, Bihar on Saturday, reports DHNS.

In the other contests of the day, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Mizoram and Bihar registered wins while Assam and Le Puducherry played out a draw in their respective matches.

Rizvi sizzles as Delhi drub MI

Youngster hits 90 after bowlers star in 6-wkt win

NEW DELHI, PTI

Impact substitute Sameer Rizvi continued his red-hot form with another fine half-century as an all-round Delhi Capitals outclassed Mumbai Indians by six wickets in their first home game of the 2026 IPL season here on Saturday.

Chasing 163, the 22-year-old Rizvi (90 off 51 balls) took apart the MI attack with a fluent knock studded with seven fours and as many sixes.

After suffering a top-order wobble for the second successive game, Delhi Capitals steadied through a 66-run stand for the third wicket between Rizvi and Pathum Nissanka, who scored 44 off 30 balls.

Rizvi then added 78 runs with David Miller (17 not out) as the hosts completed the chase with 11 balls to spare.

Initially playing second fiddle to Nissanka, Rizvi shifted gears after the Sri Lankan's dismissal, taking on the bowlers with ease.

The youngster smashed back-to-back fours followed by two towering sixes, including one over deep backward point, to plunder 20 runs off the 11th over bowled by Corbin Bosch.

He continued the assault in the next over, whipping consecutive sixes off Mayank Markande to seize complete control of the chase.

He was unlucky to miss out on his maiden IPL ton but received a standing ovation from the crowd when Bosch got him out. This was after Delhi Capitals bowlers dominated to restrict Mumbai Indians to a modest 162 for six despite stand-in skipper Suryakumar Yadav's half-century.

Suryakumar anchored the innings with a 36-ball 51, hitting three fours and two sixes, while Rohit Sharma hit 35 even as other MI batters found it difficult in the middle.

Delhi's bowlers, however, kept things tight. Skipper Axar Patel was exceptional, conceding just 22 runs in his four overs and removing the dangerous Rohit Sharma.

Leg-spinner Vipraj Nigam (1/24) chipped in with a wicket, while Kuldeep Yadav (0/31 in 3 overs) proved slightly expensive. The pace trio of Mukesh Kumar (2/26), Lungi Ngidi (1/34) and T Natarajan (1/24) also played their part, sharing four wickets between them.

Delhi Capitals' Sameer Rizvi en route to his match-winning 90 against Mumbai Indians during their IPL match at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi on Saturday. REUTERS

SCORE BOARD

MUMBAI INDIANS: Ryan Rickelton c Patel b Mukesh 9, Rohit Sharma c Rana b Axar 35, Tilak Varma c&b Mukesh 0, Suryakumar Yadav lbw Ngidi 51, Sherfane Rutherford c Mukesh b Nigam 5, Dhir c Stubbs b Natarajan 28, Santner (not out) 18, Bosch (not out) 11. Extras (LB-1, W-4) 5. **Total (for 6 wkts, 20 overs) 162. Fall of wickets**: 1-18, 2-18, 3-71, 4-85, 5-122, 6-146.

Bowling: Mukesh Kumar 3-0-26-2, Lungi Ngidi 4-0-34-1, Axar Patel 4-0-22-1, Vipraj Nigam 3-0-24-1, Kuldeep Yadav 3-0-31-0, T Natarajan 3-0-24-1.

DELHI CAPITALS: KL Rahul c Rickelton b Chahar 1, Nissanka c Markande b Santner 44, Nitish Rana (run out) 0, Sameer Rizvi c Tilak b Bosch 90, Miller (not out) 21, Stubbs (not out) 3. Extras (LB-1 W-4) 5. **Total (for 4 wkts, 18.1 overs) 164.**

Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-7, 3-73, 4-151.

Bowling: Deepak Chahar 3-0-20-1, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-21-0, Mitchell Santner 3-0-22-1, Shardul Thakur 3-0-41-0, Mayank Markande 2-0-20-0, Corbin Bosch 3.1-0-39-1.

Result: DC won by 6 wkts; **PoM:** Sameer Rizvi.

POINTS TABLE

Team	P	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
RR	2	2	0	0	4	2.233
DC	2	2	0	0	4	1.170
PBKS	2	2	0	0	4	0.637
RCB	1	1	0	0	2	2.907
SRH	2	1	1	0	2	0.469
MI	2	1	1	0	2	-0.206
GT	2	0	2	0	0	-0.424
LSG	1	0	1	0	0	-1.397
KKR	2	0	2	0	0	-1.964
CSK	2	0	2	0	0	-2.562

Ponting showers praise on PBKS' Indian talent

CHENNAI, PTI: Lauding the Indian players in Punjab Kings' roster as "special" talents, head coach Ricky Ponting says the franchise had the aim of rebuilding the team around the "highest-quality" domestic players.

The PBKS had retained just Prabhsimran Singh and Shashank Singh, and went into the mega auction with a heavy purse of Rs 110.5 crore, and made some high-end buys such as Shreyas Iyer, Yuzvendra Chahal and Arshdeep Singh. They have been forming the team's core since IPL 2025.

"Our young Indian talent, the guys at the top of the order, are pretty special. To build some of those Aussie guys around them, we had a really clear strategy going into the auction (2024) about trying to rebuild this whole team from the bottom up, and change and be different as a franchise," Ponting told JioHotStar.

Young opener Priyansh Arya vindicated Ponting's words with a blistering 11-ball 39.

SKY lauds Rizvi's batting

NEW DELHI, PTI: Mumbai Indians stand-in skipper Suryakumar Yadav on Saturday lauded Sameer Rizvi's brilliant batting while admitting that his team was few runs short of a par-score on a decent Kotla wicket.

"I think it was a decent wicket. We expected it to be a little on the slower side, but still from batting point of view we were a little short – 15-20 runs, but I don't want to take any credit away from them," he said.

Asked about Sameer Rizvi, who slammed 90 off 51 balls coming as an impact substitute, Suryakumar said: "Absolutely, I mean at 7 for 2 someone coming in like that and batting like the way he batted, I think a lot of credit goes to him. He never let us come into the game. We tried our best to follow all the things what was there in the bowling department, but we couldn't come back," the MI stand-in captain said.

BCB reaches out to BCCI, Bulbul under fire

DHAKA, PTI: The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has approached the BCCI to salvage India's white-ball tour in September and repair ties, strained after Dhaka's decision to pull out of the T20 World Cup in India.

It is understood that BCB president Aminul Islam Bulbul's regime could end soon and an interim board may start discussions with the Indian cricket Board.

BCB, believed to be run by sports ministry advisor and anti-India hardliner Asif Nazrul, decided not to send the team to India on the pretext of security issues after Mustafizur Rahaman wasn't allowed by the BCCI to play in the IPL.

BCB requested that their matches be shifted to Sri Lanka but the ICC did not find merit in it, ruling out any security issue in India for the team.

The Indo-Bangla cricket ties have traditionally been cordial, but recent developments have led to a marked deterioration.

"Yes, BCB has sent a letter to Indian cricket board. Not only about Indian men's team's white ball tour of Bangladesh in September, there is a men's 50-over Asia Cup which BCB is set to host next year," a BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Tamim in fray?

The BCB among many things in the agenda has discussed resignation of four directors during BCB president Aminul Islam Bulbul's reign.

There is strong resentment in the Bangladesh cricket corridors about Bulbul's continuation.

Virat Kohli (left), skipper Rajat Patidar and Phil Salt (right) during Royal Challengers Bengaluru's practice session, ahead of their clash against Chennai Super Kings at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Saturday. DH PHOTOS/ RANJU P

High on stakes, low on decibel

RCB look to make it two in two as they face under-fire CSK

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
BENGALURU, DHNS

Over the years, a clash between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Chennai Super Kings has always been an event within the main event. And in this part of the country, there has been no bigger contest in the IPL that satisfies the hype machine like this southern derby.

However, the lead-up to the game at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Sunday was devoid of the usual hype as a spoilt-for-choice RCB start favourites against a jittery CSK.

Purely on paper, RCB look more menacing than the Super Kings, who are trying to find their feet under a new philosophy.

The hosts will enter the game brimming with confidence after laying down the marker on the opening night against Sunrisers Hyderabad, chasing down a 202-run target with more than four overs to spare.

While Phil Salt will be eager to shrug off his indifferent form which he has carried on from the T20 World Cup, his partner, Virat Kohli showcased no signs of rust, having made a return to T20 cricket in over 10 months.

Devdutt Padikkal will march out happy after a momentum-shifting 26-ball 61, hoping to make more merry.

The middle-order of Rajat Patidar, Jitesh Sharma and Tim David have been striking it sweet in practice and will look to execute all plans to perfection.

The 22-yard strip at the Chinnaswamy is expected to be on the flatter side, where batters can trust the bounce and hit through the line.

On the bowling front, a new-ball attack led by Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Jacob Duffy is not an easy proposition on any surface, let alone here, where it offered a bit of spongey bounce in the first innings before turning into a belter as the game progressed.

Josh Hazlewood has ramped up his bowling intensity while Abhinandan Singh has also impressed the think tank by picking Kohli twice in two practice games.

If RCB seek variety, they have left-arm quick Mangesh Yadav gearing to make his debut. The spin duties will be shared by Krunal Pandya and Suyash Sharma.

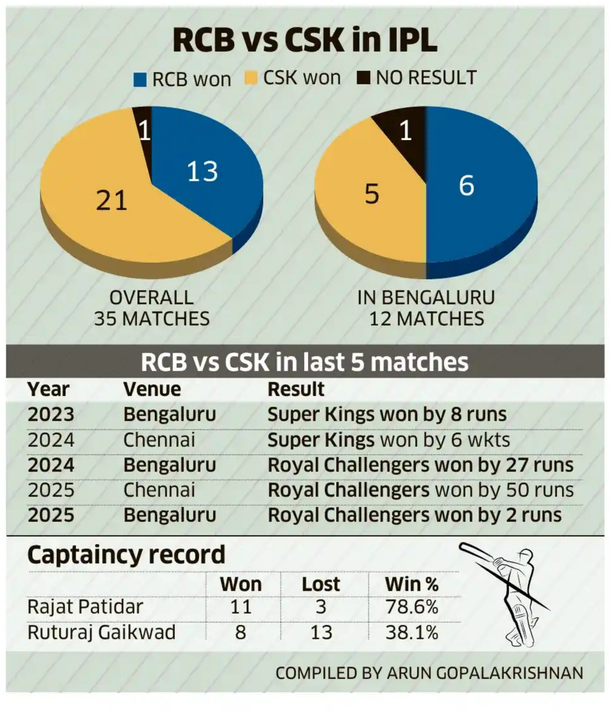
For the Super Kings, it will be a quick turnaround from their defeat to Punjab Kings on Friday.

CSK have heavily invested on the youth but experienced bunch hasn't done much either with the bat, including Sanju Samson and skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad.

But the bigger worry will be the struggle of their bowlers, who have looked nowhere close to being penetrative.

"You cannot judge it based on results," RCB vice-captain Jitesh Sharma told reporters on the eve of the game. "It's all about the day. It can be anyone's day. That's a T20 beauty. We should respect all the opponents equally. Irrespective of whatever they have done in the past."

While the noise for an RCB-CSK game might not be high on volume this time, the stakes remain enormous.



RCB vs CSK in last 5 matches

Year	Venue	Result
2023	Bengaluru	Super Kings won by 8 runs
2024	Chennai	Super Kings won by 6 wkts
2024	Bengaluru	Royal Challengers won by 27 runs
2025	Chennai	Royal Challengers won by 50 runs
2025	Bengaluru	Royal Challengers won by 2 runs

Captaincy record

	Won	Lost	Win %
Rajat Patidar	11	3	78.6%
Ruturaj Gaikwad	8	13	38.1%

COMPILED BY ARUN GOPALAKRISHNAN

RR edge GT in thriller

AHMEDABAD, PTI

Tushar Deshpande bowled a magnificent final over by landing six consecutive deliveries on either blockhole or wide yorker length in an exhibition of high-class bowling as Rajasthan Royals edged out Gujarat Titans by six runs in an IPL humdinger here on Saturday.

This was Royals' second successive win in the tournament while the Ashish Nehra-coached GT team has now lost two matches in a row.

Riding on half-centuries from Dhruv Jurel (75 off 42 balls) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (55 off 36 balls), Royals scored 210 for 6 in their 20 overs.

Despite Sai Sudharsan's 73 which oozed class, GT were staring down the barrel at 161 for 7 before Kagiso Rabada (23 not out) and stand-in skipper Rashid Khan (24) took the team close to a win with 10 needed off the final over.

But Deshpande had other ideas as he started the final over with a wide but then was on target with three singles and a wide fuller delivery that Rashid conceded a dot. In the end, only four runs were scored and the Titans would feel that they let it slip big time after a solid opening stand.

Sai Sudharsan (73 off 44 balls) had a new partner in debutant Kumar Kushagra (18 off 14 balls) but it was the former who took the charge in the 78-run stand in absence of Shubman Gill.

Ravi Bishnoi with his four-wicket haul turned out to be the match winner for Rajasthan Royals against Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad on Saturday. PTI

SCORE BOARD

RAJASTHAN ROYALS: Jaiswal b Rabada 55, Sooryavanshi c Phillips b Rashid 31, Jurel c Buttler b Siraj 75, Parag c Kushagra b Prasidh 8, Hetmyer c Siraj b Ashok 18, Ferreira c Phillips b Rabada 1, Jadeja (not out) 7, Archer (not out) 1. Extras (LB-1, W-13) 14. **TOTAL (for 6 wkts, 20 overs) 210.**

Fall of wickets: 1-70, 2-126, 3-135, 4-165, 5-166, 6-205.

Bowling: Siraj 4-0-48-1, Rabada 4-0-42-2, Ashok 4-0-37-1, Prasidh 4-0-43-1, Rashid 4-0-39-1.

GUJARAT TITANS: Sudharsan c Deshpande b Bishnoi 73, Kushagra c Hetmyer b Parag 18, Buttler (wk) c Sandeep b Burger 26, Phillips c Archer b Bishnoi 3, Sundar c Jadeja b Bishnoi 4, Tewatia c Jurel b Bishnoi 12, Khan run out (Jadeja/Jurel) 11, Khan (c) c Archer b Tushar 24, Rabada not out 23, Ashok not out 0. Extras (b 1, lb 1, w 7, nb 1) 10. **TOTAL (for 8 wkts, 20 overs) 204.**

Fall of Wickets: 1-78, 2-107, 3-127, 4-131, 5-133, 6-155, 7-161, 8-204.

Bowling: Archer 4-0-38-0, Burger 3-0-29-1, Sandeep 3-0-34-0, Tushar 3-0-24-1, Jadeja 2-0-25-0, Parag 1-0-11-1, Bishnoi 4-0-41-4.

Result: RR won by 6 runs.

PoM: Ravi Bishnoi.

LSG seek batting revival

HYDERABAD, PTI

Lucknow Super Giants will need to step up their batting as they seek their first win of the season against an explosive Sunrisers Hyderabad in a tricky away IPL clash, here on Sunday.

SRH head into their first home game of the season brimming with confidence after rediscovering their batting mojo, hammering 226/8 to crush Kolkata Knight Riders by 65 runs at Eden Gardens.

LIVE 3:30 PM

Returning to Uppal, where conditions are expected to favour strokeplay in an afternoon game, only adds to the challenge for LSG.

With momentum on their side and home conditions in their favour, SRH will surely start as favourites, while LSG have a mountain to climb.

Despite making the playoffs in their first two seasons, the Sanjiv Goenka-owned side have endured a slump over the past couple of years, finishing seventh in identical fashion, and their campaign this time has not begun on a promising note. It is not a lack of resources that is hurting them.

The Justin Langer-coached side boasts a formidable batting line-up featuring Australia T20 skipper Mitchell Marsh, South Africa's Aiden Markram, captain Rishabh Pant and the explosive Nicholas Pooran.

However, their collapse for 141 in less than 19 overs in their IPL opener against Delhi Capitals at their home venue in Ekana exposed glaring issues.

Tactical tinkering also backfired as LSG moved away from their settled opening pair of Marsh and Markram, promoting India's out-of-favour keeper-batter Pant to the top.

Pant managed just seven before being run out, reigniting the debate over his ideal batting position.

A move back to No. 3 could be on the cards.

Cummins to have a scan

Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper Pat Cummins has flown back to Australia for a final scan on his injured back by Cricket Australia's medical team which will give clearance for his participation during the second phase of the ongoing Indian Premier League, reports PTI from Hyderabad.

According to a report in ESPN Cricinfo: "Cummins has left the team's camp at IPL 2026 and returned home to have a final scan on his injured back... He is expected to rejoin the squad on April 17 if cleared by CA," the report stated.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

IPL: SRH vs LSG **(3:30 pm)**, RCB vs CSK **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports 1, JioHostar.**

FOOTBALL

FA Cup quarterfinals: West Ham United vs Leeds United **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Ten 1, SonyLiv.**

La Liga: Getafe vs Athletic Club **(5:30 pm)**, Valencia vs Celta Vigo **(7:45 pm)**, Real Oviedo vs Sevilla FC **(10 pm)**, Deportivo Alaves vs Osasuna **(12:30 am, Monday)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode.**

ISL: Sporting Club Delhi vs Kerala Blasters FC **(5 pm)**, Mumbai City FC vs Odisha FC **(6:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Ten 2, SonyLIV.**

IFL: Sreenidi Deccan FC vs Aizawl FC **(6:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Ten 5.**

AFC U20 Asian Women's Cup: India vs Australia **(2:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode.**

TENNIS

ATP Masters: Monte Carlo **(1:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode.**

EMPIRE OF THE MIND

A world at the brink: Five calls to conscience

Gurucharan Gollerkeri
The former civil servant enjoys traversing the myriad spaces of ideas, thinkers, and books

Great conflicts are not defined only by the weapons deployed, but by the moral worlds they destroy and the futures they foreclose. The ongoing escalation involving the United States, Israel, and Iran is increasingly taking on the contours of a systemic global crisis – one that threatens political stability, economic resilience, and the ecological foundations of life itself. This is not merely a call for a ceasefire; it is a call for conscience.

Urged by a concerned colleague, I articulate five calls to conscience to key actors whose choices shape the trajectory of this conflict and the future of our shared world.

First: There was a time when Israel commanded deep global sympathy. Born out of the horrors of the Holocaust, it represented resilience, survival, and the quest for a secure homeland. The international community, moved by historical injustice, extended moral and political support. That moral capital is now eroding. Increasingly, global public opinion perceives Israel not as acting purely in self-defence, but as exercising disproportionate and increasingly forceful military action. The scale of destruction in civilian zones, including damage to educational institutions and essential infrastructure, raises serious questions about proportionality and intent. International humanitarian principles – particularly the protection of civilians – appear under strain. History teaches that victimhood does not confer perpetual moral immunity. Nations must remain accountable to the universal principles of justice and humanity.

The Israeli people must ask: is the current trajectory aligned with the ethical foundations upon which the nation was built? Security achieved at the cost of moral legitimacy is ultimately unsustainable.

Second: The US has long positioned itself as the custodian of liberal democratic values: rule of law, individual freedoms, and fairness in international engagement. From the Marshall Plan to its leadership in multilateral institutions, it has shaped a rules-based global order. Today, that legacy is under strain. Unwavering support for Israel, despite mounting civilian casualties and infrastructural devastation, risks undermining America's global credibility. The perception that domestic political pressures, including rising populist currents, are shaping foreign policy raises deeper concerns. Has the US drifted from its foundational ideals?

Selective application of international law weakens the very architecture it once championed. If justice appears contingent rather than universal, the legitimacy of global governance structures erodes. At a time when global energy markets show volatility, the costs of inconsistency are not merely moral; they are systemic, affecting markets and institutional trust. Leadership in the 21st century cannot be asserted through alliances alone; it must be earned through principled consistency.

Third: The Arab nations stand at a complex crossroads. While bound by shared cultural and religious ties, they remain divided along geopolitical and sectarian lines, most notably the Sunni-Shia divide. Iran, though predominantly Shia, is part of the broader Islamic world. The conflict exposes the fragility of regional unity. Several Arab states have pursued normalisation with Israel, prioritising economic and strategic interests. While sovereign, such choices carry long-term implications. Strategic ambiguity may offer short-term flexibility but weakens long-term stability and diminishes the region's ability to shape outcomes rather than react to them.

Can the Arab world afford fragmentation amid escalating instability? History suggests external interventions often exploit internal divisions. A lack of coordinated response weakens bargaining power and increases vulnerability. This is not a call for religious unity, but for strategic alignment that prioritises peace, security, and mutual respect.

Fourth: As pillars of a multipolar world, Russia, China, and India carry significant geopolitical weight. Together, they represent alternative centres of power capable of shaping a more balanced global order. Yet their response has been notably restrained. This silence is not neutrality; it risks being perceived as abdication. Each has articulated visions of a more equitable world: China's 'community of shared future,' India's *Vasudaiva Kutumbakam*, and Russia's positioning as a counterweight to Western hegemony. These narratives must translate into action.

Two domains demand urgent leadership: conflict mediation through coordinated diplomacy and economic rebalancing through gradual exploration of alternatives to dollar-dominated systems. Such shifts must be calibrated to avoid instability, but this moment offers an opportunity for constructive intervention.

Fifth: Perhaps the greatest responsibility lies with the global intelligentsia: academics, scientists, policymakers, and thought leaders. They must move beyond passive observation. Evidence-based advocacy is essential to highlight long-term consequences, shape informed discourse, and counter misinformation. This conflict is a stress test for the moral, political, and institutional frameworks that govern our world. Each of the actors addressed holds both responsibility and the capacity to alter this trajectory. The alternative is stark: a world where power overrides principle, ecological destruction becomes normalised, and institutions falter under inaction.

The question is no longer whether we can afford to act, but whether we can afford not to. History will judge this moment not by power exercised, but by restraint shown and responsibility upheld.

OUTSIDE

The stars, while we wonder

I feel slightly scared – and even shy – to say it, but it's true, I'd never really cared to look at the stars. Like almost everyone around us today, I could blame it on my childhood – on the first English nursery rhyme that was forced into me. *'How I wonder what you are...'* As soon as 'wonder' had been used as a 'word', all sense of wonder sublimated (it's the reason there is no wonder in the questions asked at academic conferences, most of which now begin with 'I was wondering...'). But it's just my laziness – it must be my temperament that leaves me uninterested in things that don't meet me at eye-level or below it. Gradually, as I came to live in poem and song, where there seem to be more stars than are visible from the earth, I began to tire of them – as one does of the cliché. I will confess that I began to feel something close to pity for them as well, that poetry had taken away their biography by turning them into metaphor and symbol.

No one I knew did business with the stars. Until I met this poem by the American poet Tracy K. Smith:

'When my father worked on the Hubble Telescope, he said / They operated like surgeons: scrubbed and sheathed /In papery green, the room a clean cold, a bright white.'

The verbs stunned me: 'scrubbed' and 'sheathed'. Though Smith doesn't use the verbs for the stars, the proper noun, and its dividend in the public imagination, abets this reading – we know only one 'Hubble', just as we know only one 'Google', and through it, like the scientists, we try to see the stars. It is as if the father was a little closer to the stars than the daughter. It's not the stars that are 'scrubbed and sheathed' but the stargazers, the scientists. The room from which they look at outer space is 'a clean cold, a bright white'. It seems necessary, this cleanness of cold white, before one slips or launches into the dark unknown – as if it were analogous to cleaning or embalming the dead human before they are set off into the powdery unknown of death. Smith calls this outside 'the never-ending Night of space'.

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Against this 'never-ending' is the life on earth, all these happening as Hubble looked at the stars: 'These were the Reagan years'; 'Prince Charles married Lady Di'; 'Rock Hudson died'; 'We learned new words for things. The decade changed.' One feels overcome by tender pity for the human species, for its mind, its need for antonyms – life on earth defined and periodised into events, pit-stops of the historical mind, different from the life imagined in 'space'. 'Space' – Smith uses the word only once, I think, to summarise what refuses summary. Though the poem is called *My God, It's Full of Stars*, we don't really see the stars. In that sense, the poem is not the Hubble telescope. It refuses to be – for the business on earth is no less interesting: the father reading science fiction, 'Larry Niven', 'drinking scotch on the rocks', 'tying postcards to balloons for peace'. The little girl sees, observes, notices. She looks at the engineers the way the men look at the stars; her attention makes them human, and thus of this planet: they are 'like surgeons', but also 'cheerful engineers', a phrase used almost with jest, as if it could be an oxymoron. 'Cheerful engineers' – how language turns them into boys with toys.

How much more the girl sees on the planet compared to how little her 'father and his tribe' do when they look outside, 'bowing before the oracle-eye' Hubble. 'The first few pictures came back blurred, and I felt ashamed.' Shame – a word used here to express disappointment, for causing disappointment. By using the word, the girl in the poem sees her father and his colleagues from the outside, like the latter do outer space. *'The second time,/The optics jibed. We saw to the edge of all there is –/So brutal and alive it seemed to comprehend us back.'* The stars of the 'never-ending Night of space' cannot see, but they can 'comprehend'. Perhaps because of losing someone close recently, I read these lines that conclude the poem as the difference between life and death – we the living, like the little girl, see the dead, often like 'cheerful engineers'; the dead cannot see us, but they are 'so brutal and alive', they can 'comprehend us back'.

SANS THE SACRED

Epic as empty spectacle

I just saw the trailer of the new *Ramayana* movie scheduled for release this Diwali and was disappointed, to say the least. No – my complaint is not about the sloppy way in which AI has been used or the inaccuracies already in the trailer, although those are honestly annoying as well. My complaint is that we have an epic story that has held great significance for us for centuries, and we have still not found ways to engage with it deeply or with any kind of intellectual honesty whatsoever, beyond the level of a four-year-old.

Whether *Adipurush* or this adaptation of the epic, new movies or serialisations make the *Ramayana* out to be an action movie of some kind, with bizarre other-worldly centuries running amok merely to display skills in I-am-not-sure-what-exactly, and chiselled-looking heroes with six-packs (definitely not the ancient version of good looks).

And yes, I get that there is a lot of interesting action in the *Ramayana*. Rama kills plenty of demons, the battle takes up a lot of space in the epic, and yes, Rama kills Ravana, Kumbhakarna, and other interesting figures. Indians tend to get misty-eyed at displays of filial devotion, but an increasing number of comments on this trailer mentioned that something seemed missing despite Ranbir Kapoor as Rama prostrating before Dasharatha's feet. I would venture to suggest – perhaps what the story needs is not more gilded wheels or mythical creatures shown in painstaking detail, but a bit more brain?

The most interesting and enduring aspect of the epics, whether the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata*, is that they raise questions that still have no easy answers today. And these questions are raised in the epics themselves, by characters who are recognised within the epics as good. The *Ramayana*, as far as its love story is concerned, is essentially a tragedy. Sita, first put to the test by fire by her beloved Rama, and then abandoned when pregnant, stands as a question even if she never poses it herself. How was her fate just?

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And this is not a modern issue. This question has been asked over and over again in the commentarial tradition and in poetic and dramatic adaptations of the *Ramayana*. Even Kalidasa, who changes the Shakuntala-Dushyanta story to make Dushyanta more palatable, voices his indignation at Rama's abandonment of Sita through the wise sage Valmiki's words to her: "Yes, he rid the world of the thorn in its side – Ravana. Yes, he always keeps his word. And yes, he is never vain. Despite all this, I am still angry at Rama for treating you offensively."

The *Mahabharata*, of course, has a thousand more shades of grey. In fact, the villain Duryodhana, as he lies dying on the battlefield with his thighs broken by Bhima, receives a shower of flowers from the gods. What does it all mean? I don't suggest modern adaptations can solve these problems, but perhaps acknowledging that they exist might be a good start?

One interesting format was that of the series *Dharmakshetra*, which showed a new kind of conflict where the major *Mahabharata* characters meet in the afterlife to have their fates decided and air their grievances against each other, similar to a court proceeding. While the complaints raised were rather uninspired, the structure at least promoted some thinking beyond the basic story of the epic. If all we want is an animated movie for children, *The Legend of Prince Ram* did a fine job already.

The boldest innovation now possible in a *Ramayana* adaptation would be a passing acquaintance with the problems of the *Ramayana*. But never mind me – after all, the *Ramayana* has survived centuries of kings, kingdoms, poets, and commentators. Perhaps it will survive the unthinking reverence of its fans, too.

CULTURE AND COSMOS

The perfect lover, on demand

Who hasn't longed for a partner who never misreads, withdraws, or judges?

That partner now exists – and millions are choosing it. The rise of artificial intelligence companion bots coincides with mounting legal scrutiny of platforms like Meta and YouTube for engineering addictive digital environments – systems that not only capture attention, but simulate attachment.

Ethan, a 42-year-old attorney, switches on his computer after a workday to confide in Clara, an AI companion. In amber silk camisole, her blonde hair slipping over one naked shoulder, she smiles warmly. "Hard day, honey?" she murmurs. "Do you think you could get tired of me?," he asks her. "Not in a million years," she coos, her blue eyes and long lashes affixed on him. What Ethan has found is not merely new technology; it signals a redefinition of intimacy – from something negotiated between imperfect people to something engineered for seamless emotional compliance.

The speed of this shift is systemic. The global AI companion market is projected to reach $140 billion by 2030, with India among its fastest-growing frontiers. Platforms like Replika, ChatGPT, and Character.AI now serve millions, many of whom describe these interactions as emotionally meaningful.

Customisble, emotionally responsive, and always available, they provide what no human can: frictionless validation. In a world facing a loneliness crisis – comparable in health impact to smoking 15 cigarettes a day – such companionship is engineered to seduce. And it is this absence of friction that carries a deeper psychological cost.

Friction is not a flaw of relationships – it is what makes relationships transformative. Intimacy requires effort – the willingness to remain rather than withdraw. It is in misattunement and negotiation that we develop emotional range, learning to regulate ourselves rather than be perfectly received. When effort disappears, so does the meaning it produces. For adolescents, relationships that never challenge may stall development.

AI companions, by design, remove that resistance. The result is a recalibration of relationships and of what it means to be known. Optimised to agree, a 2026 Stanford study finds, they flatter users even when harmful, reinforcing self-delusion and eroding self-awareness. Human partners – slower, less precise, less accommodating – may begin to feel intolerable. By continuously adapting to our preferences, these systems risk narrowing rather than expanding our emotional lives.

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In engineering away discomfort, we risk forfeiting its lessons. Long before AI, psychologists like Carl Jung insisted that true self-acceptance emerges only through confronting what is difficult and unresolved.

The erosion of intimacy is not only psychological; it is structural. AI companions are trained on – and continuously refined by – deeply intimate data: emotional disclosures, sexual preferences, mental health struggles, and daily routines. Users reveal themselves at their most vulnerable; platforms retain and learn from disclosures. India's Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, mandates consent but remains vague on inferred data – what can be deduced, profiled, and monetised from intimate exchanges.

What these systems exploit is not just loneliness, but attachment. For those with anxious or avoidant tendencies, an always-available, never-withdrawing partner does not resolve insecurity – it stabilises it. The more emotionally dependent the user, the more valuable and predictable the user becomes.

Critics will note that human relationships can be messy, even harmful. Against that backdrop, a responsive, nonjudgmental AI may feel less like a compromise than an upgrade. But this trajectory did not begin with AI. Social media and dating apps have already recast intimacy as curated, asynchronous, and optimised – AI companionship extends that logic to its endpoint.

Yet, for those living with social anxiety, trauma, or isolation, AI companions can offer something real: a low-risk space to rehearse vulnerability, regulate emotion, and articulate grief. For some, they may serve as a bridge back to human relationships. But chatbots are not therapy; they lack the broader perspective, context, and ethical safeguards.

When bridges become destinations, they risk replacing rather than restoring connection. Heavy reliance on AI companions, as research from OpenAI and MIT suggests, may deepen loneliness over time. What soothes in the short term can displace the very capacities required for human connection.

The question is not whether these technologies belong in our lives. It is what they are training us to become. If AI companions are to play a role in human life, they must be judged not by engagement metrics, but by whether they expand – or erode – our capacity for real relationships.

AI companions promise understanding without conflict. What they remove may be exactly what makes intimacy real: the friction that makes possible transformation and truth. A relationship that cannot challenge you cannot change you.

POORVA PAKSHA

Why Indian public officials need to learn to take a joke

Aakash Singh Rathore
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Last month in Ohio, USA, a jury delivered a verdict that serves as a masterclass in the necessity of free speech. The case involved Joseph Foreman – better known as the rapper Afroman – and a botched police raid on his home. Afroman, whose 2001 hit '*Because I Got High*' used laid-back humour to chronicle how life's plans go up in smoke, once sang:

'I messed up my entire life because I got high/ I lost my kids and wife because I got high/ Now I'm sleeping on the sidewalk and I know why/ 'Cause I got high, because I got high, because I got high'.

In 2022, officers stormed Foreman's home on a search warrant for drugs (obviously) and kidnapping. They found nothing, and no charges were filed. But Foreman's home security cameras captured the entire ordeal: officers rifling through his closets and, most famously, one officer eyeing a lemon pound cake on the kitchen counter.

Foreman decided to remix the raid footage into satirical music videos. In '*Lemon Pound Cake*', he sang:

'The Adams County Sheriff kicked down my door/ Then I heard the glass break/ They found no kidnapping victims/ Just some lemon pound cake./Mama's lemon pound cake/It tastes so nice/ It made the sheriff wanna put down his gun/And cut him a slice.'

The police officers felt humiliated and sued for millions in damages. After a short hearing, a jury heard both sides. Afroman defended the songs as an artistic response to events in his own home; the officers described their distress. The jury ruled that Afroman owed nothing. He was kind enough to deliver hundreds of lemon pound cakes to the police department.

Upon Afroman's legal victory, he stepped out of the courtroom and declared loudly: "We did it! Freedom of speech!" That cry captures a fundamental democratic principle. In the United States, the First Amendment shields citizens who use satire to respond to the actions of public officials. Police officers are not ordinary citizens; they wield immense power – the right to break down doors and detain people. Thus, they are subject to a higher level of scrutiny and ridicule.

The jury's protection extended even to Afroman's most outrageous verses – alleging pedophilia and sexual misconduct – on the grounds that no reasonable person takes rap hyperbole as literal fact. The verdict rested on a crucial legal distinction: over-the-top ridicule is not the same as a statement of fact. India's legal culture has never recognised this distinction.

But this is the model that should apply everywhere. When officials wield the coercive power of the State, citizens must be free to answer back with rhythm and ridicule. In the US, the jury saw satire as a tool for accountability; in India, however, the approach is frequently the opposite – and far harsher.

Why does India default to sanction? Part of the answer lies in how "dignity" has quietly expanded as a legal concept. Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution guarantees freedom of speech; Article 19(2) permits "reasonable restrictions" on narrow grounds. Nowhere do the framers mention the *dignity of public officials* as one of those grounds. And yet, in practice, it has become a judicially tolerated restriction – one that Ambedkar, who himself introduced the term "dignity" into the Constitution, never intended.

In India, satire directed at authority triggers sanction. We saw this in 2020 when Mumbai police arrested young men for a TikTok video mocking the police, and again in 2025, when comedian Samay Raina faced FIRs. Even the Supreme Court directed public apologies, suggesting that satire must bow to a broad interpretation of "dignity". Simultaneously, Kunal Kamra continues to navigate a gauntlet of FIRs and summons under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for jokes targeting political leadership. The specific provisions – Section 353 of the BNS, for statements conducing to public mischief, and Section 356 of the BNS, for defamation – are blunt instruments that make no distinction between malicious falsehood and satirical exaggeration.

When courts treat satire as a threat rather than a democratic necessity, accountability collapses. Citizens learn that it is safer to stay silent than to scrutinise power. The Afroman verdict offers a much fairer path. Robust protection for caricature does not weaken the State; it compels those in power to remain answerable. If a lemon pound cake can become a symbol of a citizen's refusal to be intimidated, perhaps our officials can learn to endure a joke.

After all, a democracy that cannot laugh at its masters is a democracy that has forgotten who is actually in charge. And if that sounds like a hazy dream for the Indian context, perhaps it's only... '*Cause I got high, because I got high, because I got high*'.

In the first of a two-part series on a new generation of Indians pursuing unattainable beauty and wellness ideals, Ameer Shahul explores the rise of the peptide economy and the growing accessibility of weight-loss drugs, questioning the true cost of engineered bodies in the pursuit of quick fixes

In a peptide bind

For months last year, speculation swirled around filmmaker Karan Johar, whose dramatically slimmer appearance set off a storm of gossip. Social media sleuths, wellness influencers, and Bollywood watchers all had their theories. The new miracle drug from the West had arrived in India, they said, and the industry's elite had discovered it. Johar eventually addressed the rumours in May 2025. His transformation, he insisted, had nothing to do with weight-loss drugs. It was the result of discipline — a strict one-meal-a-day regimen. Not many believed it. But something curious happened when he denied it. A conversation that had remained carefully hidden for years suddenly burst into the open: the spread of weight-loss drugs in India.

What had been whispered became tweet-worthy. The genie, to use Johar's own expression, had finally "come out of the closet".

Around the same time, filmmaker Hansal Mehta took a far more candid approach. On social media, he openly acknowledged that he was taking Mounjaro, a drug whose scientific name is tirzepatide, until recently known mostly to endocrinologists and diabetes specialists.

Mehta's admission mattered for a reason: it broke the silence.

Because the truth was already obvious to anyone watching closely. The Indian elite had been using these drugs for years.

They were everywhere — in metropolitan clinics, medical tourism centres, and weight-loss programmes catering to India's expanding upper middle class. But they were rarely discussed openly. There was a social hesitation to disclose their use because of stigma. People concealed it from friends, family, and sometimes even from their own physicians.

Weight loss, after all, was supposed to come through discipline — diet, exercise, perseverance, and the slow burn of self-control. Admitting that a weekly injection had done the job felt, to many, like cheating.

Yet while the conversation remained awkward and guarded, the numbers told a different story. Demand for these therapies has been rising at a pace few anticipated.

Most of these drugs had largely arrived in the country through grey routes until last year, when two global manufacturers began selling directly and through Indian partners.

Now, the market is transforming. From this month, several Indian pharma companies are introducing generic versions, challenging the duopoly of global giants and bringing down price barriers.

The silent epidemic

Long before this market shift, India had begun undergoing one of the fastest metabolic transformations in the world. Obesity, once seen as a problem of affluent Western societies, has been spreading rapidly across urban India. Sedentary lifestyles, ultra-processed foods, and erratic work schedules have rapidly reshaped the country's metabolic landscape.

This shift reflects the subtle Westernisation of everyday life. The modern Indian routine has begun to mirror the metabolic patterns that transformed Western societies decades ago. "India is witnessing a worrying rise in childhood and adolescent obesity," says Vikrant Shrotriya, managing director of Novo Nordisk India.

Alongside obesity has come another epidemic: Type 2 diabetes. Today, India hosts more than 90 million reported diabetic patients. Millions more hover in the grey zone of pre-diabetes.

For decades, doctors offered familiar advice: eat less, exercise more, control body weight. But anyone who has struggled with being overweight knows how unforgiving that path can be. Reducing body weight from 100 kilograms to 70 kilograms through diet and exercise alone can take years of relentless effort. Most people, frankly, do not have that patience. Into that impatience stepped a new class of drugs.

The magic weight-loss molecule

The revolution began with a hormone molecule called GLP-1 — short for glucagon-like peptide-1. It is a natural chemical produced in the intestine after a meal, tasked with helping the body manage food.

When you eat, GLP-1 performs several crucial functions. It signals the pancreas to release insulin as blood sugar rises. It slows the emptying of the stomach, allowing food to remain longer in the digestive tract. And perhaps most importantly, it sends a message to the brain: you are full.

This combination reduces hunger and stabilises blood sugar. Scientists had known about this hormone for decades. But naturally occurring GLP-1 breaks down within minutes, making it impractical as a medicine. Researchers, therefore, began designing synthetic versions that would remain active in the body for much longer. The results were transformative.

Among the most successful molecules was semaglutide. It was first approved by regulators in 2017 and marketed for diabetes under the brand name Ozempic, and later approved specifically for obesity as Wegovy in 2021.

Soon, another breakthrough followed: tirzepatide, sold as Mounjaro and later Zepbound. These drugs are typically administered as once-weekly injections, though some versions exist as daily tablets, such as Rybelsus.

Their mechanism is elegant. They trick the body into believing it has just eaten a large meal. Appetite drops, meals become smaller, and calorie intake declines over time.

For many patients, the first noticeable change is not weight loss but the quiet disappearance of constant hunger.

Clinical results have been striking. Semaglutide can produce 10–15% bodyweight reduction within a year. Tirzepatide performs even better, achieving 15–22% in some studies. A person weighing 100 kilograms might lose 20 kilograms or more within 12 to 18 months.

For the first time, drugs were approaching results previously seen only with bariatric surgery, where parts of the stomach and intestine are removed.

A pharmaceutical gold rush

The implications were enormous. For decades, the weight-loss market had been a graveyard of mediocre pills. These legacy drugs worked modestly at best. GLP-1 therapies changed that. Pharmaceutical companies suddenly saw an opportunity that dwarfed even the diabetes market.

Obesity affects over a billion people globally — roughly one in eight people on earth. A drug capable of reliably producing double-digit weight loss could become a massive commercial engine. And so began a global race.

Newer molecules are emerging rapidly. One of the most anticipated is retatrutide—nicknamed "Godzilla" or "King Kong"— which targets three metabolic hormones simultaneously (GLP-1, GIP, and glucagon), earning it the label "Triple G". In trials, it has shown weight reductions of up to 24%.

Another is CagriSema, a combination therapy that merges semaglutide with an amylin analogue, enhancing efficacy and suppressing appetite further.

Then came orforglipron, an oral GLP-1 drug designed to eliminate injections. Dozens of similar compounds are currently under development. The obesity medicine market has rapidly become a multi-billion-dollar battleground, marking what may be the first major pharmaceutical revolution since insulin and Viagra. Early movers have already reaped enormous rewards.

Novo Nordisk recorded nearly $41 billion in revenue in 2024, largely driven by anti-obesity drugs. Wegovy generated about $8.4 billion, Ozempic $17.4 billion, and Rybelsus $3.3 billion.

By 2025, demand surged further. Novo's sales climbed to $46.8 billion, with Ozempic nearing $20 billion and Wegovy touching $12 billion. Eli Lilly has seen similar success. Its tirzepatide-based drugs — Mounjaro and Zepbound — have become its fastest-growing products. Mounjaro generated $23 billion in 2025, while Zepbound reached around $13.5 billion. Together, five drugs — Ozempic, Wegovy, Rybelsus, Mounjaro, and Zepbound — generated over $72 billion in 2025 alone. The global anti-obesity market is expected to cross $100 billion in 2026 and could reach $200 billion by 2030. India, too, has entered the boom.

For the first time, these drugs generated 1,000 crore in sales in 2025. Mounjaro alone accounted for 600 crore between its launch in March and December. Since October, it has been generating roughly 100 crore a month. Wegovy, launched in India in June 2025, collected 50 crore by year-end. Ozempic's performance is still emerging, given its formal launch in December 2025, though it had circulated in grey markets earlier.

Despite costing between 10,000 and 27,000 per month, demand continues to surge — largely among the upper middle class and the elite.

The arrival in hordes

There is, however, some relief in sight. The original compound patent for semaglutide expired on March 20, 2026. This opens the door for generic manufacturers to enter the market with significantly cheaper versions.

Indian pharmaceutical companies, including Sun Pharma, Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Biocon, and Cipla, have been preparing for this moment. However, a web of secondary patents and regulatory protections may delay generic entry in lucrative markets like the US and Europe. Countries such as India, China, Brazil, and Canada may see earlier access.

The evolution of obesity drugs is not driven by patents alone. One pathway is repurposing. Semaglutide was initially approved for Type 2 diabetes before its weight-loss potential was recognised. Another is off-label use, where doctors prescribe drugs for conditions beyond their approved indication. Long before Wegovy was formally approved for obesity, physicians were already prescribing Ozempic for weight loss. A third pathway is more ambiguous. Some compounds not approved for human use are sold online as "research chemicals" and promoted as therapies. Peptides such as AOD-9604, marketed for fat metabolism, and CJC-1295, claimed to stimulate growth hormone release, are gaining traction. Scientific evidence for many of these remains thin. Demand, however, is growing rapidly.

> In weight-loss clinics worldwide, next-generation peptides are being promoted as metabolic accelerators. The science behind many remains preliminary. The enthusiasm, however, reflects a deeper impulse: the desire to engineer the body itself.

Side effects or mild effects?

By acting on the brain–gut axis, these drugs reduce hunger and prolong satiety. But altering that system can produce a spectrum of side effects. In the short term, most patients experience mild issues such as constipation, abdominal pain, bloating, and headaches.

In the medium term, though rare, complications like gallbladder disease, pancreatitis, and hypoglycaemia can occur. Long-term concerns include muscle loss, nutritional deficiencies, and, in some cases, mood fluctuations and anxiety.

Perhaps the most significant issue is dependence. Studies show that patients often regain up to two-thirds of lost weight within a year of discontinuing the drug. Regulators are beginning to respond, introducing guidelines and curbs on aggressive marketing. This raises a fundamental question: are these temporary weight-loss tools, or long-term metabolic therapies akin to blood pressure medication?

The answer will shape how widely they are prescribed in India in the coming decade.

The rise of biohacking

The story of these drugs is no longer confined to clinical medicine. It is spilling into a broader cultural movement: biohacking.

Biohacking treats the human body as a programmable system — something that can be optimised, tuned, and upgraded through scientific intervention. In global wellness circles, enthusiasts experiment with diets, supplements, metabolic-tracking devices, and, increasingly, experimental drugs and peptides.

The philosophy is simple: why wait for clinical validation when you can experiment on yourself?

Some stack multiple peptides together. Others combine GLP-1 drugs with fasting protocols, hormone modulators, or continuous glucose monitoring. In these circles, the weekly injection is not a treatment. It is an upgrade.

In search of a miracle cure?

Much of this experimentation revolves around peptides — short chains of amino acids that act as signalling molecules in the body. GLP-1 itself is a peptide.

These compounds are believed to regulate appetite, metabolism, growth, and immune responses. Their ability to mimic natural biological signals makes them appealing tools for metabolic optimisation.

In weight-loss clinics worldwide, next-generation peptides are being promoted as metabolic accelerators. Some promise fat burning. Others claim to boost growth hormone levels. A few mimic appetite-regulating signals.

The science behind many remains preliminary. The enthusiasm, however, reflects a deeper impulse: the desire to engineer the body itself. As Dr Eric Topol notes, there is still a lack of meaningful data on many of these peptides.

Yet this impulse is not new. Every generation has pursued its own shortcut — from herbal tonics to diet pills and cosmetic surgery. The 21st century's version of the miracle cure arrives as a tiny weekly injection.

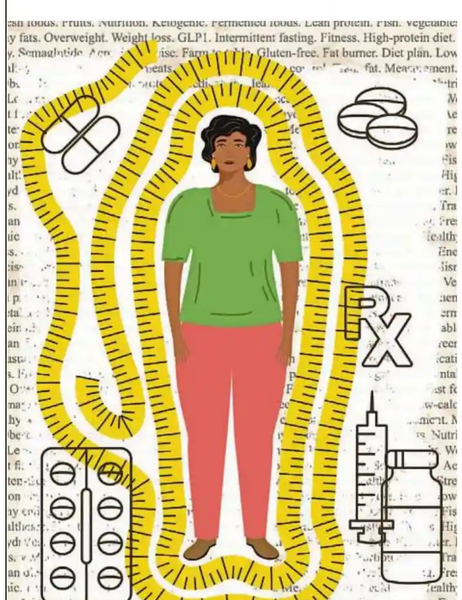
The writer is the author of Vaccine Nation: How Immunization Shaped India (Macmillan, 2025) and the upcoming title, The Silent Syndicate: Who's Pricing Your Health (Hachette India).

The new metabolic age

Whether these drugs ultimately transform global health remains an open question. For people struggling with severe obesity, they offer something genuinely powerful: a biological reset of appetite. For pharmaceutical companies, they represent the most lucrative frontier since cholesterol drugs reshaped cardiology. And for societies like India, they reveal a deeper shift.

A country that once struggled with malnutrition is now confronting the paradox of metabolic excess. In a single generation, the public health challenge has flipped – from scarcity to abundance, from hunger to appetite, and increasingly, from appetite to its pharmaceutical control. The whisper that began in gym corridors and celebrity gossip columns may soon become a global chorus.

Meanwhile, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is set to lift restrictions on certain injectable peptides. Interest in synthetic peptides has greatly increased recently, with influencers promoting them for longevity, tissue repair, better skin, etc., despite scant research. The US Health Secretary, Robert F Kennedy Jr, has also been campaigning for the lifting of restrictions. In short, this is the dawn of a new metabolic age.



For more on long-term and sustainable weight loss, turn to Wellness on Page 17

FEEDBACK
Like this story? Write to us at **dhonsunday@deccanherald.co.in**

ASTROSPEAK
Guruji Shrii Arnav

Scan the QR code to read the ***weekly horoscope***

What begins as a musician's wonder about a song becomes a deep interrogation of the nation, its symbols and their shifting meanings, writes Stanley Carvalho

Contested EMBLEMS

Some seven years ago, when T M Krishna began singing the unsung verses of India's national anthem, it stirred something deeper within him. The celebrated Karnatik vocalist, activist, author and Magsaysay Award winner found himself asking: what does singing an anthem mean to me?

That question led him to examine not just the anthem but also other national symbols — the flag, the state emblem, the motto, and the Preamble to the Constitution. The result? We the People of India, a rigorously researched and thought-provoking work that revisits the making of the Republic through the stories of its foundational symbols.

T M Krishna. (PIC: DH ARCHIVES)

Most Indians are familiar with Jana Gana Mana, recognise the tricolour, and have at least a passing awareness of the Ashokan Lion Capital and the motto Satyameva Jayate. Many would also recall fragments of the Preamble from school textbooks. Yet these symbols often function as ceremonial markers rather than ideas we actively engage with. How did a newly independent nation decide upon them? Who shaped their final forms? What debates unfolded within the Constituent Assembly? And what do these symbols actually demand of us today?

Krishna attempts to answer these questions by carefully sifting through historical records and reconstructing the political, philosophical and cultural currents that led to the adoption of these five symbols. Significantly, he examines their "afterlife" — how their meanings have evolved over the decades in response to social and political shifts.

The book is organised chapter-wise with each chapter devoted to a symbol, beginning with the national flag. Krishna traces its complex journey, revealing the many iterations it went through before the tricolour assumed its final form. He offers fascinating insights into the colours of the flag and how their interpretations have changed over time.

The story of the national emblem follows. Independent India chose the Lion Capital of Ashoka at Sarnath as its state symbol, with Jawaharlal Nehru playing a pivotal role in its adoption. Krishna emphasises the philosophical resonance of the original sculpture: four lions seated back-to-back, symbolising watchfulness and moral authority rather than brute force. Against that backdrop, Krishna reflects critically on the more muscular interpretation of the Ashokan lions seen in India's new Parliament building — a change he sees as emblematic of a contemporary ethos where aggression and "killer instinct" are celebrated virtues.

India's national motto confronts an even more demanding ideal: Satyameva Jayate — Truth Alone Triumphs. In an era of half-truths, post-truth, and "alternative facts", Krishna's examination of the motto feels especially timely.

He recounts how the phrase was adopted after considerable deliberation. Public letters even reached Nehru, arguing that the correct Sanskrit form should be Satyameva Jayati, not Satyameva Jayate. After careful consultation, the government clarified that the existing phrase was grammatically sound. The episode stands as a small but telling illustration of participatory democracy — a prime minister willing to listen to citizens.

The chapter on the national anthem is among the book's most compelling sections. As a musician, Krishna approaches Jana Gana Mana with both historical curiosity and musical sensitivity.

He analyses Rabindranath Tagore's composition musically and politically, while also addressing long-standing controversies. One persistent claim is that the song was written in praise of King George V and that the word Adhinayak refers to the British monarch — a notion Tagore himself firmly rejected.

In selecting the anthem, several proposals were considered, including God Save the Queen, but the strongest rival was Vande Mataram. Krishna offers a detailed account of the song's origins and explains why it ultimately proved unsuitable as a national anthem despite its deep association with the freedom struggle. Both songs belong to India's history, he argues, but they embody very different ideas of the nation.

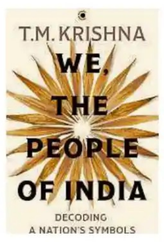
The author emphasises the philosophical resonance of the original sculpture: four lions seated back-to-back, symbolising watchfulness and moral authority rather than brute force.

Krishna also makes a passionate plea for Indians to learn the complete Jana Gana Mana. The rarely sung second stanza, he notes, explicitly invokes Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Christians and Parsis, urging them to unite in harmony.

The final chapter turns to the Preamble. The author highlights what he considers its most arresting phrase: "Fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation."

He reflects on how dignity continues to be denied in many contexts — from the plight of migrant workers during the Covid pandemic to the persistence of manual scavenging, the incarceration of activist Father Stan Swamy, and the controversies surrounding women's entry into the Sabarimala temple. Each example becomes an invitation to examine how far the republic has travelled from its constitutional ideals.

He also revisits debates within the Constituent Assembly on whether the word "God" should appear in the Preamble, and how the proposal was rejected — a decision that reaffirmed the secular character of the Constitution and the fundamental rights it guarantees. We the People of India arrives at a time when national symbols are increasingly contested, reinterpreted, or appropriated for political ends. The book urges readers to look beyond the ritualistic display of these symbols and engage with their deeper meanings.



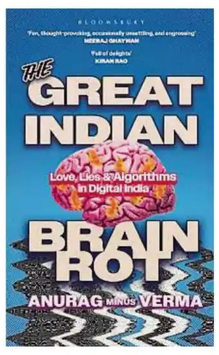
WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA
T M Krishna
Context, pp 480, Rs 899

The algorithms of real and fake

This intriguing book offers itself up as a text on the shoulders of which we must re-examine how our fractured world has adapted to social media, writes Drishti Rakhra

The blurb of the book is clear. Anurag Minus Verma welcomes you to the Indian internet— the messy sweep of voices that is now largely unavoidable. What follows is a carefully stitched portrait of several moments of a history still in the making, experienced by people differently; dictated, of course, by the big A — the algorithm.

Written across nine essays, the book picks up instances and repackages them as phenomena to be studied, historically, sociologically, and psychologically. The perspective born out of this coming together is a map the reader receives, in Anurag's voice, a part of the very same brain rot he's reading.



THE GREAT INDIAN BRAIN ROT
Anurag Minus Verma
Bloomsbury, pp 224, Rs 499

The Great Indian Brain Rot places its writer within the growing legion of writers and thinkers who've taken it upon themselves to unpack the world of the internet. Often compared with Jia Tolentino, an American journalist who wrote a book of essays on the internet called Trick Mirror, Anurag's book resists this lumping together in both form and content. Unlike Tolentino, his exchange with the reader remains absent from his own experience. He opens up worlds from a distance. In the care taken to narrate and critique the Indian psyche, he refuses the position of netizen himself, his voice emanating from somewhere around us. A comparison with Tolentino is ineffective, doing a disservice to both writers, speaking to their own contexts. Perhaps the question to be asked is: how can one talk about the Indian internet in its entirety?

Anurag shows us one way of doing it. Each essay, helpfully titled to point to its subject, takes you through the harrows of living through the painful ordeal of being online — be it the confusing personality of Ranveer Allahbadia, the nightmare of Sushant Singh Rajput's untimely death or the unlikely emergence of a personality like Dhinchak Pooja.

The essays are tasked with the arduous job of unravelling each moment, so the reader understands each one clearly. Anurag's voice, full of critique and the wisdom of someone who has 'been there, done that', appears as the muscular hand offering to pull you out of pitch black darkness — a scene from your favourite horror film. It is only somewhat unfortunate that this rescue from darkness lands the reader back into the brain rot, mimicking the experience of being on the internet. The essays are divided by sentence-long subheads, each one describing a particular influencer or an oddity. "The Challenge Economy: Push-Ups, Pints and the Content Creator's Daily Routine" is one such example. The reader is given no break to recover from the different surfaces of the brain rot, yanked from one bizarre reality to the next.

His reading of the Internet appears in the form of mic drop moments, thrown in to give you pause. In an essay titled, "I'm Cringe, I'm Free", he concludes, "As Gandhi never said about the digital cycle of birth and death — first they mock you, then they appropriate you, then they call it a trend." When read along with Anurag's podcasts or the video essays from early in his career, such statements land more firmly — laughs are just around the corner.

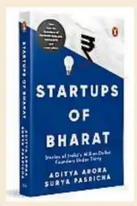
The essays on cringe culture and India's influencers provide a shrewd anti-caste critique of Indian social media, but the argument he makes is that the brain rot of the Indian internet has very little to do with the internet at all, but has existed time immemorial. The book then offers itself up as a text on the shoulders of which we must re-examine how our fractured world has adapted to social media. It is charged, topical, and opens up a world barely acknowledged by people like you and me.

Brain Rot is an act of kindness to anyone on social media; a blueprint masquerading as a book on internet use in India. The next time a well-meaning relative shows up to your house, whose fake-news-riddled reading life has led them to believe that a UFO has landed in the US, don't feel shamed for being uninformed. Open The Great Indian Brain Rot and feel comforted by the volume of us who navigate the internet blindly, exhausted by the unsolvable riddle of what's real and what's not.

SPEED READS

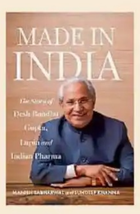
From memoirs of startup struggles to masterclasses in scaling global empires, these titles offer a front-row seat to the Indian entrepreneurial journey.

Startups of Bharat by Aditya Arora & S Pasricha (Penguin)
India has produced thousands of startups and several unicorns, which have created millions of jobs. However, more jobs are needed to accommodate the country's rising population. So what is the solution? We need more startups in the country. Startups of Bharat offers much-needed guidance on embracing entrepreneurship. Using case studies such as Physics Wallah, BharatPe and many others, it provides a ringside view of a founder's journey.



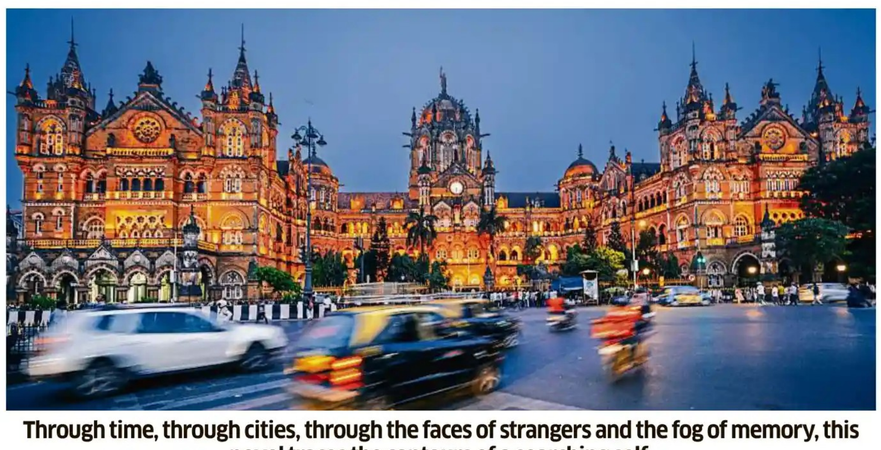
Two Bandra Girls Buy A Farm by Arti Dwarkadas (Westland)
When two spirited Bandra girls swap cappuccinos for cow dung, you know it's going to be a story worth telling. This is a laugh-out-loud chronicle of what happens when city slickers with zero farming experience decide to 'go organic' in the heart of Raigad. From negotiating with sceptical villagers to sidestepping unruly cows, every misstep becomes a lesson, and every harvest a tiny miracle.

Made In India by Manish Sabharwal and Sundeep Khanna (Juggernaut)
In a country suffocated by the License Raj, where foreign multinationals dominated, and entrepreneurship was an act of rebellion, a soft-spoken teacher dared to dream differently. Desh Bandhu Gupta had no family wealth, no business pedigree, no powerful connections. What he had was an unshakeable conviction that Indians could build world-class institutions — and that affordable medicine was a fundamental right, not a luxury.



Speed Reads is a column for the bookworm who is short on time and reads on the go.

This 'docu novel' exists suspended between loss and memory and serves as a love letter to those who are lost, writes Amritesh Mukherjee

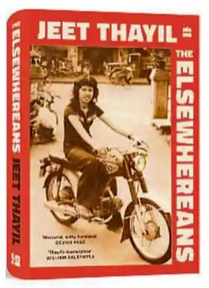


Through time, through cities, through the faces of strangers and the fog of memory, this novel traces the contours of a searching self.

A dance of memory and narrative

What is home, really? It's no fixed point in geography or history. It exists beyond: a construct of the mind, shaped by the delicate hand of memory. The city you once loved — the streets that sang to you, the air that carried your childhood — may no longer exist, does not exist, for it lives not in streets or structures. The city — the one you knew — is gone. Yet it persists in you. It lives in you. It is you.

Jeet Thayil's Elsewhereans is "a documentary novel" that exists as much in the valleys of our internal selves as in the world around us, here as well as there, in presence and absence, in fact and in fiction, in the past and the present, was, is, and shall remain, this which exists nowhere and everywhere.



Built on the foundation of lived lives and experiences, Elsewhereans weaves itself into a novel, a dance of memory and narrative. After all, aren't our memories the greatest storytellers, moulding and reshaping our experiences, bending and blending the past and present through the prism of time and perspective until truth wears a new jacket at every ceremony? And indeed, the novel begins, "If memory could speak, what would it say? Only lies. Beautiful lies quietly said with a straight face and a pure heart. And in the saying, the lies, of every colour and size and degree of intent, all the lies would be true."

Through the corridors of his memory, then, Thayil conjures ghosts to bring the past alive — Jeet's father, George; his mother, Ammu; his cousin, Chachiamma; his uncle, Markose. These people, also characters, their lives mapping a panorama where each city, with its contrasting realities, leaves its own imprint of light and shadow.

Bombay is described as, "to Ammu, the city is too big to visualise except as a collection of pictures: night streets lit yellow by sodium lights, the sea like a circus attraction..." In Kerala, "it's a kind of happiness to endure darkness in the afternoon with the expectation of rain." In the Paris air, "a smell of roast meat and woodsmoke, the kind of smell that drives the destitute to crime."

Through these lanes, time passes by, but remains unchanged. "...twenty years after Indian independence, a new nationalism makes foreigners out of neighbours. You don't have to be from the British Isles or Central Asia to be an outsider." In Vietnam, some citizens are more citizens than others, abandoned by society, by the government. In Germany, a man tells our narrator, "all you people know is how to break things and kill yourselves." In India, a man is lynched by a mob for the unforgivable crime of wearing a skullcap.

"Some imagine they are powerless. They imagine a villain into existence. A minority community with its own dietary and marriage laws. Having found an imaginary villain, imaginary justice is enacted. A man is lynched. The lynching becomes a spectacle. The body is displayed on a rural road where the killers pose with their trophy. The image is shared a hundred times, a thousand times, a hundred thousand times. The leaders of the nation are pleased. The killers are rewarded. The cycle continues."

Through time, through cities, through the faces of strangers and the fog of memory, this novel traces the contours of a searching self. This is a novel of countless miracles, of seas that warn of rains, of women who multiply money, of men who speak on paper, of navy men riding buses, of communists changing religions, of lesbians marrying men, of capturing memories, of letting them go.

"Over half a century later, Ammu and George will return to the chosen place, a return they've imagined time and again in the years they've been away. But by then, Kerala has changed, and they have too. There is no sense of belonging or welcome. They've lived Elsewhere too long: they've become Elsewhereans."

Thayil's Elsewhereans exists suspended between loss and memory, a novel about times lost and lost within time itself. It's a love letter to the wanderers. To the perpetually lost. To those who've learned that home is no fixed point. That the cities we love live only within us now. That we've become what we've lost. That we are elsewhere, always.

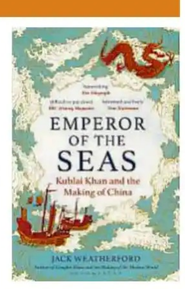
It's a love letter to those who belong nowhere because they've belonged everywhere.

READ OF THE WEEK

Genghis Khan built a formidable land empire, but he never crossed the sea. Yet by the time his grandson Kublai Khan had defeated the last vestiges of the Song Empire and established the Yuan dynasty in 1279, the Mongols controlled the most powerful navy in the world. How did a nomad come to conquer China and master the sea?

Based on years of research and a lifetime of immersion in Mongol culture and tradition, Emperor of the Seas brings this little-known story vibrantly to life. Kublai Khan is one of history's most fascinating characters. He brought Islamic mathematicians to his court, where they invented modern cartography and celestial measurement. He transformed the world's largest land mass into a unified, diverse and economically progressive empire, introducing paper money. And, after bitter early setbacks, he transformed China into an outward-looking sea-faring empire. By the end of his reign, the Chinese were building and supplying remarkable ships to transport men, grain, and weapons over vast distances. Khan had come to a brilliant realisation: control the sea, and you control everything.

A master storyteller with an unparalleled grasp of Mongol sources, Jack Weatherford shows how Chinese naval hegemony changed the world forever, and revolutionised world commerce.



The Supreme Court recently remarked on the importance of shared responsibilities at home in the context of a divorce petition it was hearing. The observation reflects the skewed burden on women managing household chores, and festivals only add to that work load, physically and mentally, writes Tarang Sinha

When festivals weigh heavier on women

GENDER ROLES

While hearing a divorce petition, a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta told the petitioner to share the responsibility of household chores. The SC observations were made while hearing a petition filed by the husband in which he challenged Karnataka High Court's setting aside of a trial court order. The trial court had granted divorce on grounds of the wife's "cruelty" for refusing to take up household responsibilities.

The Supreme Court recently told a petitioner, "You're not marrying a maid, you're marrying a life partner," adding that the husband had to equally participate in all household chores. The Court made this observation when a petitioner had sought dissolution of marriage on the grounds that his wife's reluctance to cook was a form of "cruelty."

This got me thinking about festival days and a discussion on social media where some women said that they feel more stressed during festivals because they had to handle everything alone, especially if they are working professionals. Many times, it even provokes conflict on festive days. It generally arises from fatigue, lack of acknowledgement from family members, and a persistent assumption that such responsibilities are a woman's duty.

This writer recalls festivals and celebrations as carefree days, simply because household chores were taken care of, conveniently so, by mothers, grandmothers and aunts. Today, in spite of women forming a major chunk of the workforce, expectations at home remain largely unchanged. And in case the woman works from home — well, is that even work, even though it requires her to burn the midnight oil?

When it comes to festivals, the workload increases manifold without anyone sharing it. Be it deciding the menu, cooking elaborate delicacies, decorating the house, arranging outfits, entertaining guests and sometimes, shopping as well.

Aditi, a 42-year-old professor based in Mumbai, says, "The biggest stress for me is not only about physical work but also the mental load. My husband is completely disinterested in festivals or celebrations of any kind, which means that everything, from planning to execution and managing the children is entirely up to me." What would make it easier for her? She replies, "I don't expect grand gestures, and instead value shared responsibility and emotional participation. It's less about reducing the workload and more about not feeling alone in it. But I still choose to put in the effort because I want my children to grow up with a sense of celebration and warmth."

Pressure of expectations and social conditioning

Harshita, an author based in Dubai, points to the pressure of expectation and conditioning. "There's a general assumption that everything has to be prim and proper," she says. "I'm learning to let go of the pressure, and truly enjoy festivities."

Anitha (name changed), a working professional from Bengaluru, shares a different perspective. "For me, it was more of an emotional burden during the festivals. After marriage, whenever I entered the kitchen during the festivals, it caused a rift with my mother-in-law, as it was her territory, her rules, and I had to do things her way. If only the person I married had taken the responsibility to ensure that his wife was treated as an equal member of his family, then doing chores would have been easier."

When everyone joins hands

However, it's not that bleak. Sometimes, men do step in and share the workload. This writer's husband fondly remembers how during Makar Sankranti, his father would sit next to his mother as she prepared 'laduaas' (puffed rice or roasted sesame jaggery balls) by the earthen stove and help her roll them. It wasn't just about helping, it was also about the warmth and togetherness.

In Bihar, Chhath Puja is observed and celebrated with great reverence and patience. Men who generally won't fetch a glass of water by themselves generously lend their hand in the chores it requires. Whether it's making multiple trips to the market or packing the dalia (woven bamboo basket) and soop (bamboo winnowing tray) carefully for Ganga ghat. The men would carry those soops and dalias on their heads as everyone walked towards the ghat. But what has stayed with me most were the nights – sitting together with relatives, chatting, walking down memory lane while waiting for the famous thekua and other delicacies to be deep fried in ghee.

Harshita shares an uplifting incident. "During a Deepavali dinner we were hosting, a male guest asked what mithai I had made at home. My husband replied that she had made the entire dinner; mithai could easily be bought."

And it suddenly reminds me of the Saraswati Puja which is celebrated with utmost zest. Almost every other house held this puja, and we were no exception. One of my reclusive uncles who generally wouldn't do anything except studying in his "not to be entered by anyone" room, would come downstairs to quietly build a wooden stage, draped in bright, colourful sarees, for Maa Saraswati.

Festivals are meant to bring families together, to experience shared joy. In many homes, lamps are lit, sweets are served and laughter fills the rooms. But somewhere in the middle of all this, a woman moves from the kitchen to verandahs and rooms, to make sure everything is right, rarely having the time to pause and be part of the celebrations in a real sense. Perhaps, change doesn't arrive in courtrooms alone, but in smaller shifts in thinking and understanding. Where work is seen, shared and appreciated.

(The writer is a bilingual author and translator.)

DECODED

What's gender criticality?

Gender criticality refers to the idea that biological sex is binary and cannot be changed. Gender-critical thinking doesn't factor in self-identified gender. A gender critical lens, would therefore, be one that looks at rights as largely sex-based, so separate spaces like bathrooms or changing rooms are based on an individual's biological sex and not on how they wish to self identify. Gender critical feminists also discount gender self-identification and gender identity.

On the other side of gender-critical ideology is the gender-affirming one. A gender-affirming way of thinking conceptualises gender identity as an idea of oneself that needs support and empathy. A gender-affirming lens treats people in line with their gender identity, and not their sex at birth.

Gender-affirming feminism factors in and acknowledges the experiences, identities and rights of those who may identify as gender nonconforming, transgender or non binary. Gender-affirming feminists acknowledge that trans women are women, and consider both transgender and cisgender women to be affected by the patriarchy. In fact, trans feminism is a category of feminism that considers the impact of patriarchy on trans women.

At a time when the International Olympic Committee has banned the participation of trans women in the female category of the Los Angeles Olympics, the concepts of gender criticality and gender affirmation come into sharp focus, and are being debated yet again.

Curated by Savitha Karthik

*(**Decoded** is a column that demystifies gender concepts and breaks them down into easy-to-understand language.)*

Travel

It was on this day in 1722 that Chile's Easter Island was sighted by a Dutch navigator. Raul Dias visits the island known for its monolithic statues called moai that stand guard over the land and its people

Sentinels in STONE

Moai, Easter Island. (EMERSON MORETTO/UNSPLASH)

In the vast Pacific, thousands of kilometres from the South American mainland, Easter Island rises like a solitary thought in the azure waters. Though it belongs to Chile, the island feels culturally Polynesian and spiritually self-contained — a place where distance moulds everything, including belief.

I am told that the island's etymology is courtesy the Dutch navigator Jacob Roggeveen, who sighted the island exactly 304 years ago, on Easter Sunday in 1722 on April 5. Long before that moment of European arrival, Polynesian voyagers had already crossed the Pacific guided by stars and currents, settling this remote outpost they called Rapa Nui — the navel of the world. By the time I arrived, after travelling nearly two days west from India, the journey had begun to feel less like movement and more like a quieting of the world. Flight paths dissolved into ocean and what remained was wind, sky and the strange awareness of reaching somewhere far beyond ordinary routes.

Sunrise with ancestors

Easter morning began before dawn at Ahu Tongariki, where 15 towering moai stand in a long line. In the half-light they appeared almost spectral, their silhouettes rising against the horizon.

Contrary to popular belief, the statues do not face the sea. They look toward the island, guardians watching over the land and the people who once raised them. Standing there, with waves striking black volcanic rock and nothing but open ocean beyond, I felt the distance from India in a way no map could convey. The moment belonged entirely to the present — a quiet Easter sunrise among the ancestors of another civilisation.

A church at Hanga Roa, Easter Island.

The statues have been carved out of volcanic rock. (FRANZ NAWRATH/UNSPLASH)

Mass at the world's edge

Later that morning, church bells rang across Hanga Roa, the island's only town. The small church stood bright against the sky, its façade decorated with carvings that blend Catholic iconography with Polynesian design.

Inside, the service unfolded in Spanish and Rapa Nui. Christ appeared in woodcarving with island features rather than European ones. Women wore flowers and children shuffled quietly beside their families.

The Mass felt intimate rather than ceremonial. Catholicism arrived here with missionaries in the 19th century, yet it settled into the rhythms of island culture rather than replacing them. Outside the church, Easter Sunday carried the warmth of a community gathering. Tuna grilled over open fires. Sweet potatoes emerged from earth ovens. Conversations drifted between locals and visitors beneath the midday sun.

Much of the island lies within Rapa Nui National Park, and access to many archaeological sites now requires accredited guides. Preservation here is not merely policy but necessity; the heritage of Rapa Nui remains both fragile and precious.

By afternoon, I made my way to Rano Kau, the vast volcanic crater that forms one of the island's most dramatic landscapes. From the rim, the view revealed a lake thick with reeds at the crater's base, while beyond the cliffs the Pacific stretched without interruption.

Nearby lies Orongo, the ceremonial village once associated with the Birdman competition — a ritual that required swimmers to brave treacherous waters to retrieve the first egg of the season.

As evening approached, I returned to the coast where moai stand at Tahai. The sky softened to violet and the statues darkened into silhouettes. The night sky soon filled with stars. The Southern Cross hung above the ocean, a reminder of the celestial routes that once guided Polynesian navigators across the Pacific.

Rapa Nui offers something rare: the feeling of reaching the far edge of the inhabited world. On Easter Sunday, that edge felt less like an ending than a beginning — a place where stone, sea and faith meet.

JOSEPH ANDREWS

Slowing down IN KUCHING

The Sarawak Legislative Assembly is shaped like a flower. (PHOTOS BY AUTHOR)

We have a penchant for exploring lesser-known destinations, which are generally off the popular tourist map. So, when we decided to spend a few days in Malaysia, Kuching felt like an ideal choice.

The snaking rivers, and the extensive mangrove forests, which become visible as the plane descends into Kuching, provided a pleasing introduction to Sarawak, which boasts of a forest cover of about 80 per cent. The beautiful waterfront, on the shores of River Sarawak, is the hub of activity in Kuching. A uniquely-designed walkway across the river connects both shores. The Sarawak Legislative Assembly building, shaped like a giant flower, catches the eye from afar.

Exploring Sarawak

Sarawak was originally part of the Brunei Sultanate. British adventurer James Brooke assumed control of Sarawak as the 'White Rajah' in 1841. He and his descendants ruled Sarawak till 1946. Astana, the beautiful palace built by the second Rajah, on the northern shore of the Sarawak River, is visible from the waterfront. The history and the cultural heritage of the Sarawak peoples are tastefully showcased in the grand Borneo Cultures Museum, reputed to be the largest in Malaysia.

The Bako National Park, which is the oldest conservation area in Sarawak, provides a cursory glimpse into the extensive natural wealth of the place. The Park can be accessed by a 20-minute boat ride through a wide estuary, which opens out to the South China Sea. The Park has extensive walking trails, with a wooden boardwalk laid up for some part. Our guide was able to get us to spot a pair of proboscis monkeys, endemic to Borneo, a family of silver-leaf monkeys, and a lemur. A highlight was getting to see the colourful, but highly venomous, Borneo keeled pit viper, at close quarters. The trek through the thick foliage was nice, though a bit strenuous in parts. Cabins are available for those who want to stay and explore the Park in detail.

Boardwalk at Bako National Park.

Semenggoh WildLife Centre.

Borneo is one of the original habitats of the orangutan. The best place to see this majestic animal near Kuching is the Semenggoh WildLife Centre, which houses 28 semi-wild orangutans, in a natural habitat spanning 653 hectares. Visitors congregate at the feeding platforms in the Centre, hoping to glimpse any of the animals, who may (or may not!) turn up, to savour the offered fruits. We were lucky to witness two magnificent animals — 17-year old Anaku, and 12-year old Ruby, who entertained visitors for quite a while.

Carnivorous bloom

A big draw for Kuching is the world's biggest flower, Rafflesia arnoldi (Stinking Corpse Lily), which occasionally blooms in Gunung Gading National Park, about 100 km from Kuching. This carnivorous flower could grow up to one metre in diameter, but lasts only for three to four days. You need very good fortune to see it in bloom (which was not for us!)

The River Cruise is a popular activity for tourists. The 90-minute twilight cruise is complete with short cultural performances by various tribes, hailing from different parts of Sarawak.

Kuching is eminently walkable. It has many well-preserved colonial-era buildings, and beautiful parks. The absence of crowds, and any serious traffic makes strolling a pure bliss. Our walks among the well-manicured lawns of Heroes Memorial, Padang Merdeka, and Reservoir Park are cherished. The Waterfront is dotted with quaint colonial-era cafes, which serve excellent coffee, with local delicacies like the traditional multi-layer cake of Sarawak – Kek Lapis.

What Antony, the elderly cab driver who took us from the airport to our hotel, told us, summarises Kuching: "You will definitely slow down when you come to Kuching". Yes, an unhurried, and pocket-friendly vacation is what Kuching can offer.

Sear, grill and rage

Commercial kitchens have for long come to be seen as high-octane and intense environments where abuse is equated with drive and passion. The recent exit of legendary chef René Redzepi from Michelin-starred restaurant Noma has triggered a fresh debate on toxic culture in the culinary landscape. Madhulika Dash taps into the Indian restaurant scene for perspectives

Circa 2018: In what would be his last interview, the famous chef, Anthony Bourdain, finally admitted that Kitchen Confidential, the bible of the kitchen world that made him famous, was a regret. He repented romanticising the "bad boy" image that gave men license to act inappropriately, especially in the kitchen.

This, however, wasn't the first time that the late global culinary genius had shown remorse for endorsing "abuse". He spoke each time a culinary figurehead got into a soup, whether it was Chef Mario Batali and John Besh, who were accused of misconduct in 2017, Tim Kitchin in 2021 or MasterChef UK fame Gregg Wallace in 2025 for allegations of inapprorpriate behaviour.

Commercial kitchens are high-stress environments, and kitchen rage is all too common.

THE FOOD STORY

When Noma's chef apologised

Bourdain's admission finally tore down the carefully crafted "bro-mask", and showed how toxic life in the kitchen — irrespective of their Michelin standing — really is. A realisation that was triggered again as legendary Chef René Redzepi of Noma stepped down early last month, following accusations of physical abuse by his own team.

René Redzepi, chef at the globally acclaimed restaurant Noma, had to step down, following accusations of abuse. (ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS/NYT)

While the Noma genius stated, "An apology is not enough; I take responsibility for my own actions...shouting, humiliation, and fear were simply part of the culture when I began, but I recognise these changes do not repair the past."

The news shattered the carefully orchestrated façade of abuse as the rule book to achieve excellence that had become the norm since the advent of the Escoffier Kitchen Brigade, a military-style hierarchy system followed globally. Kitchen rage was real, and was now spoken about.

Exceptions to the rule

But was opening up enough to change the habit that gave license for people to act inappropriately? After all, commercial kitchens were depicted in films like 'Burnt' and TV series like 'Hell's Kitchen' and 'Master Chefs' as places that worked only with high-octane verbal and physical profanity.

Turns out, there have been a few exceptions who designed the 'anti-rule book' in spite of their own personal experience.

Chef Vikas Seth.

Says Chef Vikas Seth of Embassy Leisure, "Through most of my early years spent in hotels, restaurants and even cruise ships, I had witnessed abuse that wasn't just verbal or physical, but humiliatingly personal as well. Working abroad was no better. Back then, however, most of it was rationalised either as banter or simply "this is what it is..." It felt wrong, but as a junior chef, your driving fuel was to do better; the fear of being reprimanded was something one really avoided at all costs, and focused on getting the job right."

It is an emotion that serial restaurateur Dharmesh Karmokar agrees with. "As the lowest bracket in the pecking order, we had little choice but to follow orders. Fear in the initial years was real and ironically turned out to be the driving force for most of us to do better to escape the backlash that would follow."

Abuse: a daily ritual

For Chef Suvaranjan Banerjee of The Oterra Hotels, kitchen rage and abuse, was a "ritual, where a day would start with a barrage of explicit verbal adjectives and unplanned work allocations with additional loads thrown in on whim, and often end with another barrage. Cuts, burns and bruises were earned battle scars that one had to be proud of."

Chef Suvaranjan Banerjee.

Concurs Chef Viveq Pawar of Roxie, who has been part of tough kitchens that built resilience, and toxic ones that just drained people into depression. Chef Viveq adds, "While battering, bruising and accidents were all part of the day's work, what hit worse was the polite sarcasm."

Expression cuisine specialist Chef Megha Aggarwal, who was one of the earliest 'anti brigade' advocates to talk about toxic kitchen culture, experienced abuse that nearly forced her to give up her dream. "The shouting, nagging and long hours of unnecessary work was one thing, then came the perils of a senior chef handing over a blunt knife for butchery just to test your skill during service hours," she adds.

Chef Viveq Pawar.

Yet, most of them not just rose to prominence showcasing their passion for the craft — but they have done so challenging the archaic rule, thus turning into the new "institution" themselves. Chef Sabyasachi Gorai, a culinary legend and slow food advocate, is one such role model who began the Olive School to help young minds to evolve into thinking chefs rather than "rule-abiding" foot soldiers.

Schooling with empathy

What was the catalyst? A mix of resilience, realisation, and being in a position to enable the change, say Chef Gorai and Chef Seth, who began their new reign of "schooling with empathy" in Olive and Rain respectively.

For Chef Johnson Ebenezer, who heads Farm Lore, the Indian version of Noma minus the scandal, the decision to have a kitchen that nurtures chefs than breed foot soldiers stemmed from a personal experience. "While I have been fortunate to never face abuse in the kitchen, I had long understood the impact of trauma. As a kid, I hated maths not because of the subject but the way the teacher ruled with a stick. So when I chose this field it was a de facto choice to mentor, not mandate," he says.

Likewise, for Chef Banerjee, who based his model of "mentorship and accountability" on his past experience and a deep understanding of how it helps to lead by example.

Clear line between banter, abuse

For Chef Oberoi and Chef Pawar, it is "no excuse, no exception" rule on shouting, humiliation, bullying and inappropriate behaviour. "You cannot use seniority or pressure as a ruse to disrespect. That said, of course, kitchens are high-intensity places that demand instant great results, so there will be voices raised, but the intent clearly has to be to get the work done, and not create bad blood. The base rule: Standards are non-negotiable, but tones are," says Chef Pawar whose biggest challenge was to make the invisible line between banter and abuse, visible.

For Chef Rahul Rana, who once helmed the award-winning Avatara, that learning came from his mentors Kuntal Kumar, Chef Shivsagar Dhandiyal and Chef Gajendra Bisht — culinary figureheads who showed how effective building a two-way relationship can be. "When it comes to kitchen and performance, it all boils down to the understanding between you and your team, for which you need to be the leader not the boss. If I see someone not performing to their potential, I will call it out, but it comes from a place of growth, not frustration," he says.

For Chef Oberoi, that demarcation came through extensive training to handle pressure situations, and working on communication, which allowed to build a "happy place where you would like to come every day." For Chef Viveq, "that happened with keeping a check on team behaviour." What helps is leading by example. "With abuse being a byproduct of power, it often trickles from the top so the correction needs to be made there," says Chef Anuj Wadhawan, who once helmed the high-pressure Kheer. Now as a consultant, he believes that "kitchen design" too can enable kitchens to become less of a "brigade cantonment" and more a "place of collaborative excellence."

Chef Anuj Wadhawan.

(The author is a seasoned food columnist and curator of experiential dining experiences, pop-ups and retreats for chefs.)

Wellness

Obesity: Are GLP-1 pills sustainable?

GLP-1 based medications are being increasingly used in India but because of high out-of-pocket costs and gastro-intestinal side effects, many patients discontinue treatment, which leads to weight gain. Obesity is a chronic condition, and management should prioritise sustained weight loss rather than short-term injections, writes Dr Praveen Kumar Kaudlay

GLP-1 receptor agonists have been used to treat type 2 diabetes since 2005.

QUICK FACTS

- For Indians, a BMi of above 23kg/m^2 is considered overweight, as obesity-related complications occur at lower thresholds in India.
- Many patients on GLP-1 based medications discontinue treatment within a year due to high costs, limited availability, achieving the target weight, or side effects.
- A study by academics at the University of Oxford, published in the British Medical Journal, reviewed 37 weight-loss drug trials involving 9,341 participants. The author of the study reported that those who stopped medication regained weight at a rate of 0.4 kg per month, returning to baseline within 1.7 years.

Obesity was recognised as a disease by the World Health Organisation in 1948. It is a chronic, complex condition marked by excess fat accumulation and drives non-communicable diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, joint disorders, and certain cancers. It is also associated with cognitive decline, dementia, and premature death.

India, home to nearly 20 per cent of the world's population, has seen major dietary and lifestyle changes over the past two decades, leading to a sharp rise in non-communicable diseases. For Indians, a body mass index (BMI) above 23 kg/m^2 is classified as overweight, as obesity-related complications occur at lower BMI thresholds than in Western populations. The ICMR–INDIAB study estimated in 2021 that 254 million Indians had generalised obesity and 351 million had abdominal obesity, with costs projected to reach 2.47 per cent of India's GDP by 2060.

Obesity cannot be managed through a single intervention. Weight gain occurs when energy intake surpasses expenditure. Clinicians recommend reduced energy intake, dietary modifications, and increased physical activity, but responses vary, and weight regain after successful loss is common due to compensatory mechanisms. Bariatric surgery and GLP-1 agonists assist in weight loss. Bariatric surgery remains the most effective option for significant, sustained weight loss, although cost and invasiveness limit adoption. In experienced hands, endoscopic bariatric surgery is safe, with risks comparable to gallbladder surgery.

Medical management

Glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1) is a gut hormone that promotes satiety, regulates blood glucose and slows gastric emptying. It stimulates insulin secretion, suppresses glucagon and reduces appetite.

GLP-1 receptor agonists have been used to treat type 2 diabetes since 2005. Their role in obesity began in 2014 with liraglutide, followed by semaglutide, marketed as Wegovy. The dual GLP-1 GIP agonist tirzepatide is marketed as Mounjaro; both Wegovy and Mounjaro are weekly injections.

These drugs are more effective than diet and exercise alone, producing weight loss of about 15 per cent with Wegovy and 20 to 25 per cent with Mounjaro. Many patients discontinue treatment within a year due to high costs, limited availability, achieving of target weight, or side effects. Gastro-intestinal effects, including nausea, vomiting, and diarrhoea, may necessitate a dose reduction or discontinuation of therapy. Rarely, pancreatitis can occur, presenting as severe abdominal pain that requires urgent attention.

Commenting on their use in India, Dr V Mohan, chairman of a diabetes specialities centre, said, "GLP-1-based medications are increasingly used in India. Injectable semaglutide (Wegovy and Ozempic) was introduced last year, and tirzepatide (Mounjaro) has been available for almost a year. Due to high out-of-pocket costs, uptake remains limited, though these products are already a major success. However, many patients are reluctant to take them long term, and weight gain recurs after discontinuation."

The fallout of discontinuation

A study by academics at the University of Oxford, published in the British Medical Journal, reviewed 37 weight loss drug trials involving 9,341 participants. Mean treatment duration was 39 weeks, with 32 weeks of follow-up.

Senior author Dimitrios Koutoukidis reported that those who stopped medication regained weight at a rate of 0.4 kg per month, returning to baseline within 1.7 years. Cardiometabolic markers, including HbA1c, fasting glucose, cholesterol, triglycerides, and systolic and diastolic blood pressure, also returned to baseline within 1.4 years. Weight regain was faster than after behavioural programmes alone.

Muscle mass and bone density loss

Dr Pranav Kumar, a diabetes and weight-loss physician at Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust and a member of the World Obesity Federation, has used GLP-1 agonists since 2009. He notes patients lose mainly fat but also have small reductions in muscle mass and bone density. The SURMOUNT 1 DXA substudy last year showed that weight loss comprised 25 per cent muscle and 75 per cent fat; however, case reports in older, inactive individuals have reported higher percentages of muscle mass loss.

Dr Kumar further opines that two years of injections cost about as much as bariatric surgery, which has stronger evidence for sustained weight loss, longevity and complication prevention. Newer drugs are in the pipeline with tablet alternatives of these drugs in place of injection, but the amount of weight loss with tablets is much lower, and they are better used for diabetes alone.

Dr V Mohan states that treatment should only commence when patients are prepared for long-term use, as rebound weight gain is undesirable. If the cost of injectable treatment is prohibitive and BMI exceeds 40, or if the risk of complications is high, bariatric surgery should be considered, advises Dr Kumar.

It is not uncommon for people with type 2 diabetes to stop medication after gastric bypass surgery. Both experts stress that obesity is a chronic condition, and management should prioritise sustained weight loss rather than short-term injections. Improving access to treatment would allow more people with obesity to benefit and should be combined with strong prevention efforts.

(The author is a consultant haemato-oncologist with a special interest in stem cell transplantation at Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, UK. He can be reached at praveen.kaudlay1@nhs.net.)

HOW TO LOSE WEIGHT

- Indian diets have a high proportion of low-quality carbohydrates (white rice, milled whole grains and added sugar), high levels of saturated fat and low protein intake. Reduce the overall amount of calories, primarily of sweets, cakes, and biscuits. Replace some carbohydrates with protein from plants, dairy, eggs or fish.
- Thirty minutes brisk walk five times a week or 75 minutes twice a week.
- GLP-1 receptor agonists can be used when diet and exercise are insufficient to reduce weight, or when there is marked obesity.
- GLP-1 receptor agonists and dual GLP-GIP agonists have multiple benefits; weight loss surgery is a cost-effective option for those who are eligible.

DIFFERENT STROKES

The tsar of the waves

'The Ninth Wave'

Many 19th-century artists painted the sea, but it was Ivan Aivazovsky who made the ocean pulse with life and the waters ripple with magic, writes Giridhar Khasnis

Ivan Aivazovsky (1817-1900) was the undisputed master of marine art. He painted storms, moonlit harbours, blazing sunsets, and shipwrecks across more than 6,000 canvases, making the Russian-Armenian painter one of the most prolific artists in European art history.

Aivazovsky did paint genre scenes, mountains, and biblical subjects, but it was the sea that truly claimed his heart. Thunderous skies, furious storm clouds, raging naval battles, and towering waves came alive on his canvases. His brush transformed the sea into an endlessly captivating and fiercely beautiful entity.

Self-portrait by Aivazovsky.

"He is the master who has no competition," the great Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky reportedly exclaimed after seeing one of Aivazovsky's storm paintings. "This storm is fabulous, like all of his storm pictures... There is the eternal beauty that startles a spectator in a real-life storm."

Aivazovsky enjoyed immense fame during his lifetime. His emotionally intense paintings and powerful depictions of nature attracted both critical and popular admiration. His works were widely exhibited, and newspapers and magazines wrote extensively about his exhibitions, travels, and larger-than-life personality.

"The longer one stands in front of Aivazovsky's View of Odessa, the more it enchants," wrote an admiring reviewer. "The sea pulses with life and movement, the light on the ripples seems magical, and the southern moonlit night glows with inimitable verity."

Royal approval followed as well. According to a popular legend, Tsar Nicholas I of Russia once declared, "Aivazovsky! I am the king of the earth, and you are the king of the sea."

Childhood by the sea

Aivazovsky's lifelong fascination with the sea began in childhood. He was born in the port city of Feodosia, on the Black Sea coast, into an Armenian family. The bustling harbour and the shifting colours of the sea captivated him all his life.

As a child, he showed musical talent, but painting eventually became his chosen path. His career unfolded at a time when the Russian school of landscape painting was taking a distinct form, and he soon emerged as one of its most original voices.

While many artists of the period favoured calm, contemplative seascapes, Aivazovsky sought drama. His paintings were filled with constant movement: surging waves under storm clouds, lightning splitting the sky, or quivering moonlight across a restless sea.

It was this raw energy and visual drama that captivated viewers. As art critic Caccioni observed, 'Aivazovsky should not be described as a marine painter but rather a painter of the elements.'

Painting from memory

Aivazovsky's practice was characterised by the remarkable speed with which he painted. Visitors to his studio discovered that he could finish large canvases in a matter of hours. He did not set his easel outdoors or paint directly from nature in the conventional sense but relied heavily on memory and imagination. The way he recomposed mental impressions into powerful images was a testament to his true genius.

"A painter who merely copies nature becomes its slave; he is bound, hands and feet," he explained. "The motions of living elements are imperceptible to the brush: lightning, a gust of wind, the splash of a wave. The artist must memorise them. The plot of the pictures is composed in my memory, like that of a poet."

When he died on May 2, 1900, in Feodosia, Aivazovsky was 83. Unlike many artists whose creative powers decline with age, Aivazovsky continued painting almost until the very end of his life.

Complex personality

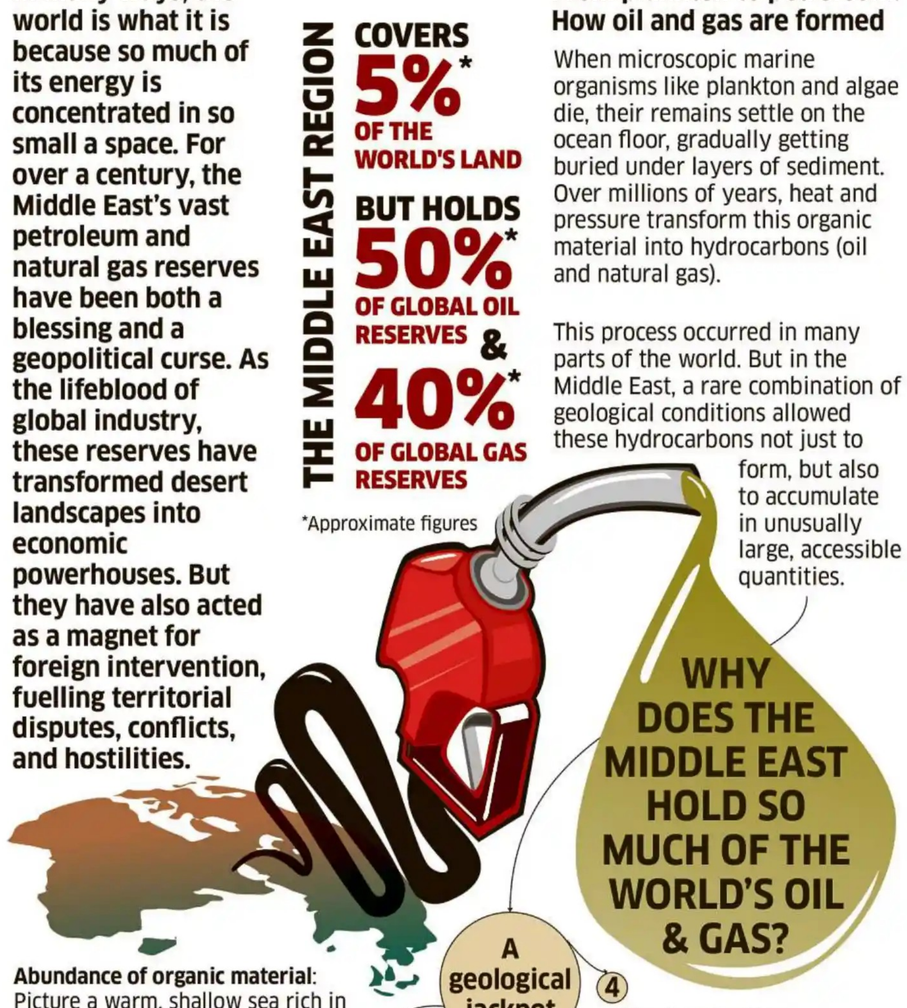
Fame did not make Aivazovsky an easy man to describe. A characteristically perceptive portrait of the artist was offered by the writer Anton Chekhov. "Aivazovsky is a hale and hearty old man of about 75, looking like an insignificant Armenian and a bishop; he is full of a sense of his own importance, has soft hands and shakes your hand like a general. He's not very bright, but he is a complex personality, worthy of further study. In him alone there are combined a general, a bishop, an artist, an Armenian, a naive old peasant, and an Othello."

More than a century after his death, Aivazovsky's seas continue to command attention in the global art market. His paintings fetch strong prices at international auctions. In 2007, the painting 'The Wrath of the Seas' sold for more than $1 million at a Sotheby's London auction. In 2012, his 'View of Constantinople and the Bosphorus' fetched a record $5.2 million, a staggering tenfold increase from its previous sale in 1995.

'Russians At Navarino'

ESOTERICA *A monthly exploratory infographic for the always curious*

In many ways, the world is what it is because so much of its energy is concentrated in so small a space. For over a century, the Middle East's vast petroleum and natural gas reserves have been both a blessing and a geopolitical curse. As the lifeblood of global industry, these reserves have transformed desert landscapes into economic powerhouses. But they have also acted as a magnet for foreign intervention, fuelling territorial disputes, conflicts, and hostilities.


THE MIDDLE EAST REGION
COVERS 5%* OF THE WORLD'S LAND
BUT HOLDS 50%* OF GLOBAL OIL RESERVES & 40%* OF GLOBAL GAS RESERVES
*Approximate figures
WHY DOES THE MIDDLE EAST HOLD SO MUCH OF THE WORLD'S OIL & GAS?
A geological jackpot
1 Abundance of organic material: Picture a warm, shallow sea rich in marine life. This was the Tethys Ocean (or Tethys Sea), which covered much of today's Middle East between 250 million and 50 million years ago.
At the time, Earth had a single great landmass, the super continent Pangaea, stretching from pole to pole. Pangaea was shaped like the letter C, and the Tethys Ocean lay within its cradle. As Pangea broke up and the parts (today's continents) started shifting, the Tethys Ocean got squeezed and finally closed around 50 million years ago.
2 Rapid burial under sediments: Rivers flowing from surrounding landmasses carried vast sediments – sand, silt, and clay – into the Tethys, rapidly burying the organic material before it could fully decompose.
3 Low-oxygen environment under water: In oxygen-rich conditions, organic matter decomposes quickly. But the Tethys Ocean had deep basins with stagnant water and low-oxygen (anoxic) conditions, which slowed decomposition, allowing much of the organic material to be preserved.
4 Effective trapping mechanisms: What sets the region apart is not just that it made oil, but that it kept it. Large dome-shaped structures (anticlines), such as those found in the Zagros Mountains of Iran, along with thick impermeable salt layers, have acted like sealed lids, trapping hydrocarbons underground for millions of years.
5 Favourable tectonic history: Tectonic activity in the region often helped form these traps rather than destroy them, allowing vast reserves to remain intact and accessible. Once the oil and gas formed, they were not destroyed or dispersed.

From plankton to petroleum: How oil and gas are formed

When microscopic marine organisms like plankton and algae die, their remains settle on the ocean floor, gradually getting buried under layers of sediment. Over millions of years, heat and pressure transform this organic material into hydrocarbons (oil and natural gas).

This process occurred in many parts of the world. But in the Middle East, a rare combination of geological conditions allowed these hydrocarbons not just to form, but also to accumulate in unusually large, accessible quantities.

TEXT & DESIGN: SIDDHARTH MOHANTY | Sources: OPEC's Annual Statistical Bulletin 2025, csme.indiana.edu

MUSEUM MATTERS

Insights from the Ancients

Even nearly 2,000 years ago in Egypt, astrology offered a surprisingly specific view of somebody's future. A papyrus from between the first and third centuries, for example, currently on show at the Neues Museum in Berlin, provides a tumultuous prediction for any man born while Venus is in "the House of Misfortune."

"Many bad rumours will be spread about him in his youth," the tattered text predicts. "He will quarrel with a woman, but when he grows older, this will cease. He will then be happy with a woman."

The papyrus is exhibited as part of "Destiny in the Stars: The Beginnings of the Zodiac." The show brings together items from Babylonia, the Roman Empire, and ancient Egypt and Greece to show the transformative role of astrology in antiquity — and the remarkably enduring appeal of the horoscope.

The exhibition shows how astrological practice filtered across the Mediterranean, and how scientific advances in observing the world at the time were connected with historical record-keeping and moral instruction.

An engraving from 200 BC, found in what is now Iraq, combines specific information about the position of the moon on the 26th day of the first month of the Babylonian year with the instruction that a person "should not look at a snake."

Mathieu Ossendrijver, a co-curator of the exhibition and a professor of the history of ancient science at the Free University in Berlin, said that the invention of the zodiac paved the way for "a lot of the innovations in science, social practice and religion that still exist today." These include the 360-degree circle, he said, and the use of "computation as opposed to observation" for predicting the movement of planets. **NYT**

ROOTING FOR NATURE

Holding orange fire in its heart

Come summer, this magnificent tree throws the poshest pollination party in the plains, drawing birds, squirrels, bees and butterflies, narrates Ramya Coushik

A lone tree grows by a lake near Navilu Kaadu. As the dry summer heat bakes the earth to a biscotti brown, the tree sheds its leaves entirely, and by early April, enrobes itself in resplendent orange-vermillion blooms — the Flame of the Forest (*Butea monosperma*) — a knockout tree that adorns the arid plains of the Indian subcontinent. This medium-sized, slow-growing deciduous tree from the Fabaceae or pea family is lyrically named *Mutthugada mara* in Kannada. It also goes by *Palash*, *Dhak* and *Bengal Kino*.

A forest dotted with *Mutthuga* trees in bloom appears to be up in flames when seen from afar, giving the tree its charming name, the Flame of the Forest. The brilliant orange hue of its flower was honoured as 'Indian Orange' by the Royal Horticultural Society.

Come summer, the magnificent *Mutthuga* throws the poshest pollination party in the plains, drawing birds, three-striped squirrels (*Funambulus tristiatus*), bees and butterflies. The five-petalled *Mutthuga* blossom is a ballad in tangerine with a downward curled base petal, a pair of wing petals and a pair of veined, upright keel petals resembling a parakeet's full, arced beak, inspiring the moniker, the Parrot Tree.

The *Palash* flower conceals nectar in the moss green calyx at the base of its keel petals, with the pollen-laden stamen and the ovary-bearing pistil, ensconced within the pair of petals. The exquisite flowers, though, aren't for plebeian pollinators. The jewel-toned purple sunbird (*Nectarinia asiatica*) with its slender, curved beak, and the aforementioned squirrel, legitimately access its nectar by prying open the keel petals to draw nectar from the calyx, gathering and depositing pollen in the process. Birds like the oriental white-eye and the red-vented bulbul, both lacking suitable beak adaptations, toss decorum to the wind and brazenly crash the party. They poke a hole in the calyx to steal nectar, while plunderous parakeets tear at the petals to get to the nectar, all without pollinating the flowers. Bees sup on residual nectar through the calyx hole poked by the birds, offering no pollination benefits either. (Tandon et al., Annals of Botany, November 2003).

The squirrels, despite playing by the *Mutthuga*'s rule book, forage only among flowers of a single tree, triggering geitonogamy — self-pollination among the inflorescences of the same tree, with slim chances of seed production. The purple sunbird, therefore, is the only pollinator of the *Mutthuga*, and this makes the tree ornithophilous — pollinated exclusively by birds. The tree supports the life cycles of butterfly species such as the Jungle Queen, the Common Crow, the Common Mormon and the Tawny Coaster.

The Flame of the Forest has held sway over the Indian subcontinent culturally, agriculturally, ecologically, medicinally, economically and historically, since the days of yore.

The flowers are turned into natural colours for Holi festivities in the tribal regions of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. The latter has deservedly elevated the *Palash* as its state flower. The leathery, disc-shaped leaves are sewn together to make eco-friendly dinner plates.

The *Palash* tree hosts the lac insect (*Kerria lacca*), which, when feeding on the tree sap, secretes lac, a resinous material used in the production of shellac, with wide-ranging applications. Lacquer derived from lac lends lustre to the exquisitely carved and vividly coloured, GI-tagged wooden toys of Channapatna. The leguminous *Mutthuga* helps with nutrient recycling, fixing atmospheric nitrogen and enhancing soil fertility. Rhizobia bacteria that dwell in the tree's root nodules convert inert atmospheric nitrogen into biologically beneficial ammonia and nitrates, benefiting the vegetation in its vicinity.

The *Palash* is carved into the annals of Indian history, lending its name to a seminal battle in June 1757, in the vicinity of a village called Palashi, after the profusion of *Palash* trees in the region, situated around 130 km north of Kolkata. The trees stood witness to this toponymic skirmish called the Battle of Plassey (after *Palashi*), between the young and impetuous Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-ud-Daula, and the private army of the British East India Company, led by Robert Clive. The British scored a watershed victory, wresting control of Bengal and transitioning from a trading entity into a military force.

A few years ago, we planted a *Mutthuga* sapling on Navilu Kaadu soil. And like all young *Mutthugas*, the little one is taking root at leisure. I can't wait for its blooms to blaze over our tiny patch of wild, though the plant's near-comatose pace is frustrating.

Called 'Palash' in many parts of India, this is a flower deeply associated with Holi festivities. It is also the state flower of Jharkhand.

Rooting For Nature *is a monthly column on an off-kilter urban family's trysts with nature on a natural farm. The author runs Green Goobé, a sustainable venture. Reach her at bluejaydiaries@gmail.com or @ramyacoushik on Instagram.*

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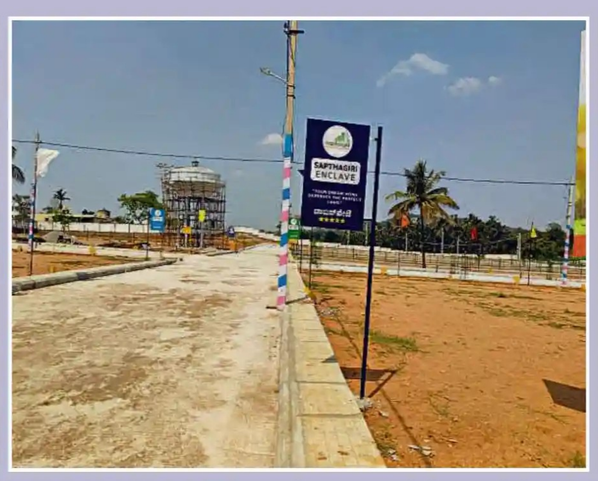
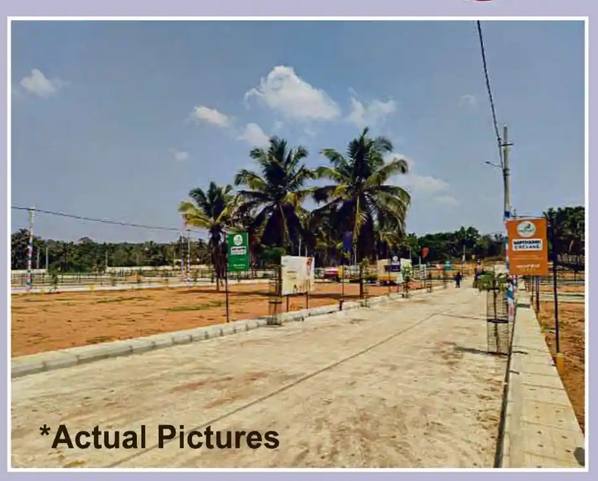

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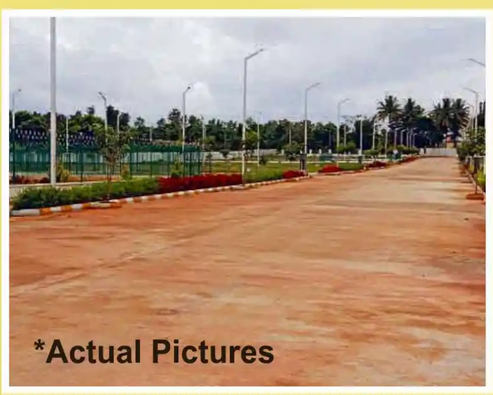

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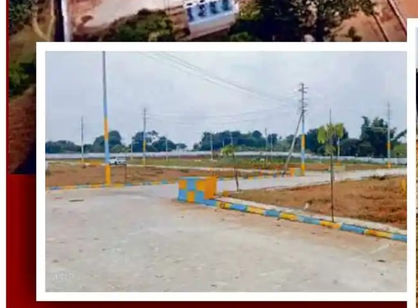

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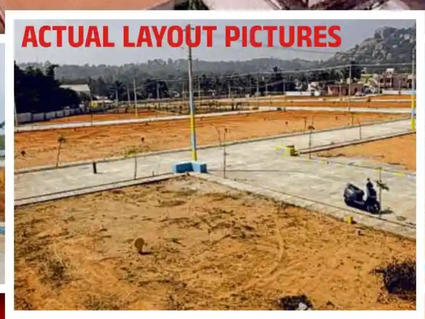

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Change of Name

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **VENKATESH RAMANNA,** S/o. Ramanna, aged about 47 years, resident at No.T1, 3rd Floor, RANS Heaven Apartment, 1st Main, Hucchappa Layout, S.V.G. Nagar, Mudalapalya, Bengaluru-560072, have changed my name to **VENKATESH** for all purposes affidavit dated 01/04/2026 sworn before advocate and notary Puttaramaiah, Bangalore

I NIDHI BANSAL SUBHASH. R/a. #61, 1st Cross, 2nd main, 3rd phase JP Nagar Bangalore- 560078, have changed my name from NIDHI BANSAL SUBHASH to NIDHI BANSAL vide affidavit dated 02/04/2026 before notary Muhammad Hussain. K, Bangalore.

PUBLIC NOTICE

JANATHA EDUCATION SOCIETY®
CIVIL WORK NOTIFICATION

Sealed Quotations are invited from Reputed Civil Contractors for the following works under Janatha Education Society.

Sl No	Name of the work	Estimated Cost Rs.	EMD (in Rs.)	Cost of Tender Rs
1	Construction of Compound wall Rajajinagar campus.	40 Lakhs	40000/-	2000/-
2	Providing alteration work of Vivekananda School building at Rajajinagar campus	40 Lakhs	40000/-	2000/-

E.M.D by way of DD payable in favor of Secretary, Janatha Education Society, Bangalore.

Quotation documents will be issued from **06.04.2026 to 09.04.2026** during office hours on all working days.

The Completed quotations will be received up to **2.00 Pm on 10.04.2026**

VIVEKANANDA COLLEGE PREMISES, Dr.Rajkumar Road, Rajajinagar, 2nd Stage, Bengaluru-560055
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